

WNT PATHWAY ANTAGONISTS

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims the benefit of priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) of U.S. U.S. Serial No. 60/507,163, filed September 29, 2003, the entire content of which is incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates generally to the use of chemical compounds to treat a variety of disorders, diseases and pathologic conditions and more specifically to the use of various aromatic compounds for inhibiting signaling pathways.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

[0003] Pattern formation is the activity by which embryonic cells form ordered spatial arrangements of differentiated tissues. Speculation on the mechanisms underlying these patterning effects usually centers on the secretion of a signaling molecule that elicits an appropriate response from the tissues being patterned. More recent work aimed at the identification of such signaling molecules implicates secreted proteins encoded by individual members of a small number of gene families.

[0004] A longstanding idea in cancer biology is that cancers arise and grow due to the formation of cancer stem cells, which may constitute only a minority of the cells within a tumor but are nevertheless critical for its propagation. Stem cells are appealing as the cell of origin for cancer because of their pre-existing capacity for self-renewal and for unlimited replication. In addition, stem cells are relatively long-lived in comparison to other cells within tissues, providing a greater opportunity to accumulate the multiple additional mutations that may be required to increase the rate of cell proliferation and produce clinically significant cancers. Of particular recent interest in the origin of cancer is the observation that the Wnt signaling pathway, which has been implicated in stem cell self-renewal in normal tissues, upon continuous activation has also been associated with

the initiation and growth of many types of cancer. This pathway thus provides a potential link between the normal self-renewal of stem cells and the aberrantly regulated proliferation of cancer stem cells.

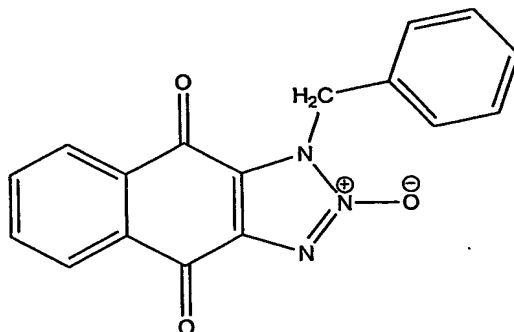
[0005] The Wnt growth factor family includes more than 10 genes identified in the mouse and at least 7 genes identified in the human. Members of the Wnt family of signaling molecules mediate many important short- and long-range patterning processes during invertebrate and vertebrate development. The Wnt signaling pathway is known for its important role in the inductive interactions that regulate growth and differentiation, and likely also plays important roles in the homeostatic maintenance of post-embryonic tissue integrity. *Wnt* stabilizes cytoplasmic β -catenin, which stimulates the expression of genes including c-myc, c-jun, fra-1, and cyclin D1. In addition, mis-regulation of Wnt signaling can cause developmental defects and is implicated in the genesis of several human cancers. More recently, the Wnt pathway has been implicated in the maintenance of stem or progenitor cells in a growing list of adult tissues that now includes skin, blood, gut, prostate, muscle and the nervous system.

[0006] Thus, portions of the Wnt pathway can be taken as target molecules for the regulation of cell growth, oncogenesis and apoptosis of cells. The ability to modulate activity of the Wnt signaling pathway represents a possible therapeutic approach to several clinically significant cancers. A need therefore exists for methods and compounds that inhibit signal transduction activity by modulating activation of a *Wnt*-mediated signal transduction pathway, to reverse or control aberrant growth.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

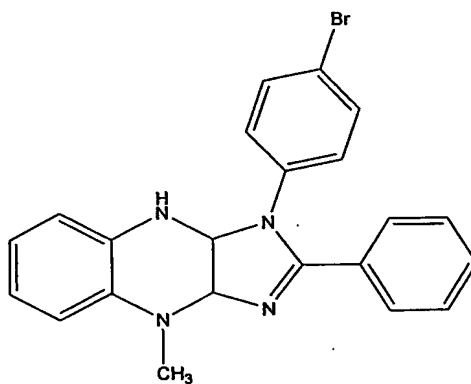
[0007] The present invention makes available methods and reagents, involving contacting a cell with an agent, such as an aromatic compound, in a sufficient amount to antagonize a *Wnt* activity, e.g., to reverse or control an aberrant growth state.

[0008] According to one embodiment of the invention, the compound having structure (I), or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, is provided:



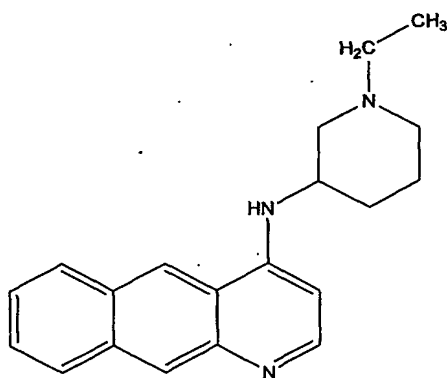
(I)

[0009] According to another embodiment of the invention, the compound having structure (II), or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, is provided:



(II)

[0010] According to another embodiment of the invention, the compound having structure (II), or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, is provided:



(III)

[0011] According to yet another embodiment of the invention, compounds including a first aromatic moiety fused to a second aromatic moiety are provided, wherein the first aromatic moiety is naphthalene-1,4-dione moiety and the second aromatic moiety is an N-substituted triazole-N-oxide moiety. An example of the substituent that can be used in the N-substituted triazole-N-oxide moiety includes an alkylaryl group, such as benzyl group.

[0012] According to yet another embodiment of the invention, compounds including a benzopiperazine moiety fused to a substituted imidazole moiety are provided. The benzopiperazine moiety can include an alkylpiperazinyl group, such as methylpiperazinyl group. The imidazole moiety can include a phenyl substituent, and can further include a halogenated aromatic group, e.g., a bromophenyl group, attached to a nitrogen atom in the imidazole structure.

[0013] According to yet another embodiment of the invention, compounds including an azaanthracene moiety and a secondary amino moiety, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, are provided. The secondary amino moiety can be attached to the nitrogen-containing ring of the azaanthracene moiety.

[0014] According to another embodiment of the invention, a method for treating a disorder is provided, the method can include administering an effective amount of a compound according to any embodiment of the present invention, or any combination thereof, or pharmaceutically acceptable salts, hydrates, solvates, crystal forms and individual diastereomers thereof, to a subject in need of such treatment. The compound can be administered in combination with a therapeutic agent, immunomodulatory agent, therapeutic antibody or an enzyme inhibitor.

[0015] Thus, in one embodiment, the methods of the present invention include the use of aromatic compounds that agonize inhibition of *Wnt* signaling, such as by inhibiting activation of *Wnt* downstream components of the signaling pathway, in the regulation of repair and/or functional performance of a wide range of cells, tissues and organs, including normal cells, tissues, and organs. For instance, the subject method has therapeutic and cosmetic applications ranging from regulation of neural tissues, bone and cartilage formation and repair, regulation of spermatogenesis, regulation of smooth muscle, regulation of lung, liver and other organs arising from the primitive gut, regulation of hematopoietic function, regulation of skin and hair growth, etc. Moreover, the subject methods can be performed on cells that are provided in culture (*in vitro*), or on cells in a whole animal (*in vivo*).

[0016] In another embodiment, the subject method can be used to treat epithelial cells having a Wnt receptor. For instance, the subject method can be used in treating or preventing basal cell carcinoma or other Wnt pathway-related disorders. In certain embodiments, a subject antagonist may inhibit activation of a *Wnt* pathway by binding to *patched*.

[0017] In another embodiment, the present invention provides pharmaceutical preparations comprising, as an active ingredient, a *Wnt* antagonist, such as described

herein, formulated in an amount sufficient to inhibit, *in vivo*, proliferation or other biological consequences of *Wnt* mis-expression.

[0018] In another embodiment, the subject method can be used as part of a treatment regimen for malignant medulloblastoma and other primary CNS malignant neuroectodermal tumors. In other embodiments, the subject method can be used as part of a treatment regimen for rhabdomyosarcoma, lung cancer, and in particular small cell lung cancer, gut-derived tumors, including but not limited to cancer of the esophagus, stomach, pancreas, and biliary duct system; prostate and bladder cancers, colon cancer, or liver cancer.

[0019] The subject treatments using *Wnt* antagonists can be effective for both human and animal subjects. Animal subjects to which the invention is applicable extend to both domestic animals and livestock, raised either as pets or for commercial purposes. Examples are dogs, cats, cattle, horses, sheep, hogs, and goats.

[0020] According to another embodiment of the invention, a pharmaceutical composition is provided. The composition can include a compound according to any embodiment of the present invention, or any combination thereof, in a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

[0021] According to another embodiment of the invention, an article of manufacture is provided, the article comprising packaging material and a pharmaceutical composition contained within the packaging material, where the packaging material comprises a label which indicates that the pharmaceutical composition can be used for treatment of disorders and where the pharmaceutical composition can include a compound according to any embodiment of the present invention, or any combination thereof, in a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

[0022] According to another embodiment of the invention, a process for making a pharmaceutical composition is provided, the process involving combining a compound according to any embodiment of the present invention, or any combination thereof, or its

pharmaceutically acceptable salts, hydrates, solvates, crystal forms salts and individual diastereomers thereof, and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

[0023] In another embodiment, a method for inhibiting growth of a tumor cell is provided, which involves administering to a subject in need thereof an effective amount of a compound according to any embodiment of the present invention, or any combination thereof, and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

[0024] According to another embodiment, a method for treating a disorder modulated by the *Wnt* signaling pathway is provided, which includes administering to a subject in need thereof an effective amount of a compound according to any embodiment of the present invention, or any combination thereof, and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

[0025] Further provided is a method for inducing apoptosis in a tumor cell, which includes administering to a subject in need thereof an effective amount of a compound according to any embodiment of the present invention, or any combination thereof, and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0026] Fig. 1 is a graphical representation showing dose-response behavior of the Wnt reporter (*7xTCF-luciferase* (Firefly) (pSUPERTOPFLASH)) and control reporter (*Renilla luciferase* (pRL-SV40)) with candidate Wnt antagonist A6;

[0027] Fig. 2 is a graphical representation showing Wnt responsive cell lines.

[0028] Fig. 3 is a pictorial and graphical representation showing a Wnt pathway agonist.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0029] The present invention relates to the discovery that signal transduction pathways regulated by *Wnt* can be inhibited, at least in part, by aromatic compounds. As set out in more detail below, groups of aromatic compounds can inhibit proliferation of normal cells or tumor cells having *Wnt* modulated activity.

[0030] While not wishing to be bound by any particular theory, the activation of a receptor may be the mechanism by which these compounds act. For example, the compounds could affect the activity of a Wnt frizzled receptor. Alternatively, the compounds could affect the activity of the serine/threonine kinase GSK3 β , which is involved in the down regulation of β -catenin. The compounds could also affect the activity of the *APC* gene. In the absence of Wnt signal, the APC protein functions to foster degradation of β -catenin and prevent its nuclear entry. Wnt stimulation, loss of APC protein function, or of its associated partner Axin, all lead to stabilization of and concentration in the nucleus of β -catenin, which then can act as a transcriptional co-activator by associating with the Tcf/LEF family of transcription factors. APC in complex with Axin and other proteins target β -catenin for proteasomal degradation by scaffolding the association between β -catenin and kinases whose action lead to β -catenin ubiquitinylation; this action is abrogated by recruitment of the degradation complex to the membrane upon Wnt activation of a receptor complex that includes Frizzled (Fz), a relative of Smo, and LRP5/6. The pathway can also be activated by mutations of β -catenin that render it resistant to degradation.

[0031] Or, for example, the compounds could alter the activity of *disheveled*, which is a positive mediator of Wnt signaling. For example, the ability of these compounds to inhibit proliferation of cells may be due to the ability of such molecules to interact with *Wnt*, or at least to interfere with the ability of those proteins to activate a *Wnt*-mediated signal transduction pathway. Signal transduction antagonists of different structures, even ones that bind to the same protein in the signaling pathways, may act in slightly different ways. Accordingly, even if a particular condition caused or contributed to by aberrant or unwanted activation of the *Wnt* pathway shows little response to treatment by one of the antagonists disclosed herein, another of the antagonists disclosed herein may nonetheless be efficacious.

[0032] It is therefore specifically contemplated that these aromatic compounds that interfere with aspects of *Wnt* signal transduction activity will likewise be capable of inhibiting proliferation (or other biological consequences) in normal cells and/or cells having mutations that result in aberrant cell proliferation. Such mutations can include, for

example, mutations in the β -catenin gene or the APC gene. Thus, it is contemplated that in certain embodiments, these compounds may be useful for inhibiting *Wnt* activity in normal cells, e.g., which do not have a genetic mutation that activates the *Wnt* pathway. In other embodiments, the subject inhibitors are organic molecules having a molecular weight less than 2500 amu, more preferably less than 1500 amu, and even more preferably less than 750 amu, and are capable of inhibiting at least some of the biological activities of *Wnt* proteins, preferably specifically in target cells.

[0033] Thus, the methods of the present invention include the use of compounds, such as aromatic compounds, which antagonize activity of the *Wnt* pathway resulting in the regulation of repair and/or functional performance of a wide range of cells, tissues, and organs. In an alternative embodiment, the present invention provides compounds, such as aromatic compounds, which agonize activity of the *Wnt* pathway, resulting in the regulation of repair and/or functional performance of a wide range of cells, tissues, and organs. For instance, the subject methods have therapeutic and cosmetic applications ranging from regulation of neural tissues, bone and cartilage formation and repair, regulation of spermatogenesis, regulation of smooth muscle, regulation of lung, liver and other organs arising from the primitive gut, regulation of hematopoietic function, regulation of skin and hair growth, etc. Moreover, the subject methods can be performed on cells which are provided in culture (*in vitro*), or on cells in a whole animal (*in vivo*). See, for example, PCT publications WO 95/18856 and WO 96/17924 (the specifications of which are expressly incorporated by reference herein).

[0034] In another embodiment, the subject method can be used to treat epithelial cells employing a compound, such as an aromatic compound, which antagonizes *Wnt* function, e.g., by agonizing *Wnt* activity. For instance, the subject method can be used in treating or preventing basal cell carcinoma, colon cancer, or other *Wnt* pathway-related disorders. In an alternative embodiment, the subject method can be to treat epithelial cells employing an agent which agonizes hedgehog function, e.g., by antagonizing *Wnt* activity.

[0035] In another embodiment, the subject method can be used as part of a treatment regimen for cancer. Such cancers include malignant medulloblastoma and other primary

CNS malignant neuroectodermal tumors, rhabdomyosarcoma, lung cancer, and in particular small cell lung cancer, gut-derived tumors, including but not limited to cancer of the esophagus, stomach, pancreas, and biliary duct system; prostate and bladder cancers, colon cancer, and liver cancer.

[0036] In another aspect, the present invention provides pharmaceutical preparations comprising, an aromatic compound such as described herein, formulated in an amount sufficient to regulate, *in vivo*, Wnt pathway, e.g., proliferation or other biological consequences of mis-expression of *Wnt*.

[0037] The subject treatments using the subject compounds can be effective for both human and animal subjects. Animal subjects to which the invention is applicable extend to both domestic animals and livestock, raised either as pets or for commercial purposes. Examples are dogs, cats, cattle, horses, sheep, hogs, and goats.

[0038] Accordingly, the present invention is directed to heterocyclic compounds, such as heterocyclic compounds derived from benzotriazine, triazines, or pteridine, and to use of the heterocyclic compounds for therapeutic purposes.

[0039] The following terminology and definitions apply as used in the present application. The chemical terms used herein are generally in conformity with the terminology recommended by the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC).

[0040] The phrase "aberrant modification or mutation" of a gene refers to such genetic lesions as, for example, deletions, substitution or addition of nucleotides to a gene, as well as gross chromosomal rearrangements of the gene and/or abnormal methylation of the gene. Likewise, "mis-expression" of a gene refers to aberrant levels of transcription of the gene relative to those levels in a normal cell under similar conditions, as well as non-wild-type splicing of mRNA transcribed from the gene.

[0041] "Basal cell carcinomas" exist in a variety of clinical and histological forms such as nodular-ulcerative, superficial, pigmented, morphealike, fibroepithelioma and nevoid syndrome. Basal cell carcinomas are the most common cutaneous neoplasms

found in humans. The majority of new cases of nonmelanoma skin cancers fall into this category.

[0042] The term “carcinoma” refers to a malignant new growth made up of epithelial cells tending to infiltrate surrounding tissues and to give rise to metastases. Exemplary carcinomas include: “basal cell carcinoma”, which is an epithelial tumor of the skin that, while seldom metastasizing, has potentialities for local invasion and destruction; “squamous cell carcinoma”, which refers to carcinomas arising from squamous epithelium and having cuboid cells; “carcinosarcoma”, which include malignant tumors composed of carcinomatous and sarcomatous tissues; “adenocystic carcinoma”, carcinoma marked by cylinders or bands of hyaline or mucinous stroma separated or surrounded by nests or cords of small epithelial cells, occurring in the mammary and salivary glands, and mucous glands of the respiratory tract; “epidermoid carcinoma”, which refers to cancerous cells which tend to differentiate in the same way as those of the epidermis; i.e., they tend to form prickle cells and undergo cornification; “nasopharyngeal carcinoma”, which refers to a malignant tumor arising in the epithelial lining of the space behind the nose; and “renal cell carcinoma”, which pertains to carcinoma of the renal parenchyma composed of tubular cells in varying arrangements. Other carcinomatous epithelial growths are “papillomas”, which refers to benign tumors derived from epithelium and having a papillomavirus as a causative agent; and “epidermoidomas”, which refers to a cerebral or meningeal tumor formed by inclusion of ectodermal elements at the time of closure of the neural groove.

[0043] The “corium” or “dermis” refers to the layer of the skin deep to the epidermis, consisting of a dense bed of vascular connective tissue, and containing the nerves and terminal organs of sensation. The hair roots, and sebaceous and sweat glands are structures of the epidermis which are deeply embedded in the dermis.

[0044] “Dental tissue” refers to tissue in the mouth which is similar to epithelial tissue, for example gum tissue. The method of the present invention is useful for treating periodontal disease.

[0045] “Dermal skin ulcers” refer to lesions on the skin caused by superficial loss of tissue, usually with inflammation. Dermal skin ulcers which can be treated by the method of the present invention include decubitus ulcers, diabetic ulcers, venous stasis ulcers and arterial ulcers. Decubitus wounds refer to chronic ulcers that result from pressure applied to areas of the skin for extended periods of time. Wounds of this type are often called bedsores or pressure sores. Venous stasis ulcers result from the stagnation of blood or other fluids from defective veins. Arterial ulcers refer to necrotic skin in the area around arteries having poor blood flow.

[0046] The term “ED₅₀” means the dose of a drug which produces 50% of its maximum response or effect.

[0047] The terms “epithelia”, “epithelial” and “epithelium” refer to the cellular covering of internal and external body surfaces (cutaneous, mucous and serous), including the glands and other structures derived therefrom, e.g., corneal, esophageal, epidermal, and hair follicle epithelial cells. Other exemplary epithelial tissue includes: olfactory epithelium, which is the pseudostratified epithelium lining the olfactory region of the nasal cavity, and containing the receptors for the sense of smell; glandular epithelium, which refers to epithelium composed of secreting cells; squamous epithelium, which refers to epithelium composed of flattened plate-like cells. The term epithelium can also refer to transitional epithelium, like that which is characteristically found lining hollow organs that are subject to great mechanical change due to contraction and distention, e.g., tissue which represents a transition between stratified squamous and columnar epithelium.

[0048] The term “epithelialization” refers to healing by the growth of epithelial tissue over a denuded surface.

[0049] The term “epidermal gland” refers to an aggregation of cells associated with the epidermis and specialized to secrete or excrete materials not related to their ordinary metabolic needs. For example, “sebaceous glands” are holocrine glands in the corium that secrete an oily substance and sebum. The term “sweat glands” refers to glands that secrete

sweat, situated in the corium or subcutaneous tissue, opening by a duct on the body surface.

[0050] The term “epidermis” refers to the outermost and nonvascular layer of the skin, derived from the embryonic ectoderm, varying in thickness from 0.07-1.4 mm. On the palmar and plantar surfaces it comprises, from within outward, five layers: basal layer composed of columnar cells arranged perpendicularly; prickle-cell or spinous layer composed of flattened polyhedral cells with short processes or spines; granular layer composed of flattened granular cells; clear layer composed of several layers of clear, transparent cells in which the nuclei are indistinct or absent; and horny layer composed of flattened, cornified non-nucleated cells. In the epidermis of the general body surface, the clear layer is usually absent.

[0051] The “growth state” of a cell refers to the rate of proliferation of the cell and/or the state of differentiation of the cell. An “altered growth state” is a growth state characterized by an abnormal rate of proliferation, e.g., a cell exhibiting an increased or decreased rate of proliferation relative to a normal cell.

[0052] The term “agonist” refers to an agent or analog that binds productively to a receptor and mimics its biological activity. The term “antagonist” refers to an agent that binds to receptors but does not provoke the normal biological response. Thus, an antagonist potentiates or recapitulates, for example, the bioactivity of patched, such as to repress transcription of target genes. The term “Wnt antagonist” as used herein refers not only to any agent that may act by directly inhibiting the normal function of the Wnt protein, but also to any agent that inhibits the Wnt signaling pathway, and thus recapitulates the function of *Wnt*. The term “Wnt agonist” likewise refers to an agent which antagonizes or blocks the bioactivity of *Wnt*, such as to increase transcription of target genes.

[0053] As used herein, “immortalized cells” refers to cells which have been altered via chemical and/or recombinant means such that the cells have the ability to grow through an indefinite number of divisions in culture.

[0054] "Internal epithelial tissue" refers to tissue inside the body which has characteristics similar to the epidermal layer in the skin. Examples include the lining of the intestine. The method of the present invention is useful for promoting the healing of certain internal wounds, for example wounds resulting from surgery.

[0055] The term "keratosis" refers to proliferative skin disorder characterized by hyperplasia of the horny layer of the epidermis. Exemplary keratotic disorders include keratosis follicularis, keratosis palmaris et plantaris, keratosis pharyngea, keratosis pilaris, and actinic keratosis.

[0056] The term "LD₅₀" means the dose of a drug which is lethal in 50% of test subjects.

[0057] A "patient" or "subject" to be treated by the subject method can mean either a human or non-human animal.

[0058] The term "prodrug" is intended to encompass compounds which, under physiological conditions, are converted into the therapeutically active agents of the present invention. A common method for making a prodrug is to include selected moieties which are hydrolyzed under physiological conditions to reveal the desired molecule. In other embodiments, the prodrug is converted by an enzymatic activity of the host animal.

[0059] As used herein, "proliferating" and "proliferation" refer to cells undergoing mitosis.

[0060] The term "proliferative skin disorder" refers to any disease/disorder of the skin marked by unwanted or aberrant proliferation of cutaneous tissue. These conditions are typically characterized by epidermal cell proliferation or incomplete cell differentiation, and include, for example, X-linked ichthyosis, psoriasis, atopic dermatitis, allergic contact dermatitis, epidermolytic hyperkeratosis, and seborrheic dermatitis. For example, epidermodysplasia is a form of faulty development of the epidermis. Another example is "epidermolysis", which refers to a loosened state of the epidermis with formation of blebs and bullae either spontaneously or at the site of trauma.

[0061] The term "psoriasis" refers to a hyperproliferative skin disorder which alters the skin's regulatory mechanisms. In particular, lesions are formed which involve primary and secondary alterations in epidermal proliferation, inflammatory responses of the skin, and an expression of regulatory molecules such as lymphokines and inflammatory factors. Psoriatic skin is morphologically characterized by an increased turnover of epidermal cells, thickened epidermis, abnormal keratinization, inflammatory cell infiltrates into the dermis layer and polymorphonuclear leukocyte infiltration into the epidermis layer resulting in an increase in the basal cell cycle. Additionally, hyperkeratotic and parakeratotic cells are present.

[0062] The term "transformed cells" refers to cells which have spontaneously converted to a state of unrestrained growth, i.e., they have acquired the ability to grow through an indefinite number of divisions in culture. Transformed cells may be characterized by such terms as neoplastic, anaplastic and/or hyperplastic, with respect to their loss of growth control.

[0063] The term "heterocyclic," when used to describe an aromatic ring, means that the aromatic ring contains at least one heteroatom. The abbreviation "Het" is sometimes used to signify a heterocyclic structure.

[0064] The term "heteroatom" is defined to include any atom other than carbon, such as nitrogen.

[0065] The term "aromatic" or "aryl" is defined to include a cyclically conjugated molecular entity with a stability, due to delocalization, significantly greater than that of a hypothetical localized structure, such as the Kekulé structure.

[0066] The term "heterocyclic," when not used to describe an aromatic ring, is defined to include cyclic (i.e., ring-containing) groups other than aromatic groups, the cyclic group being formed by between 3 and about 14 carbon atoms and at least one heteroatom described above. The term "substituted heterocyclic" is defined to include both aromatic and non-aromatic structures to heterocyclic groups further bearing one or more substituents.

[0067] The term "heteroaryl" is defined to include aromatic rings, where the ring structure is formed by between 3 and about 14 carbon atoms and by at least one heteroatom described above, and the term "substituted heteroaryl" refers to heteroaryl groups further bearing one or more substituents.

[0068] The term "fused" or "fused rings" is defined as polycyclic ring system in which any two adjacent rings have at least two adjacent atoms in common.

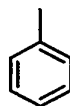
[0069] The term "alkyl" is defined to include a monovalent straight or branched chain hydrocarbon group having from one to about 12 carbon atoms, for example, methyl, ethyl, *n*-propyl, *iso*-propyl, *n*-butyl, *iso*-butyl, *tert*-butyl, *n*-pentyl (also known as *n*-amyl), *n*-hexyl, and the like.

[0070] The term "alkylaryl" is defined to include an alkyl group substituted with an aryl group, such as phenyl group.

[0071] The term "halogen" is defined to include an atom of fluorine, chlorine, bromine or iodine.

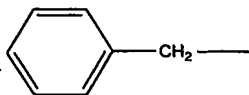
[0072] The term "N-oxide" is defined to include nitrogen-containing heterocyclic moieties in which at least one nitrogen atom is associated with oxygen to form the structure N→O.

[0073] The term "phenyl" is defined to include moieties having structure (Ph):



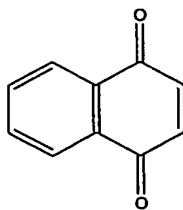
(Ph)

[0074] The term “benzyl” is defined to include moieties having structure (Bz):



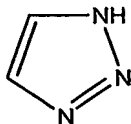
(Bz)

[0075] The term “naphthalene-1,4-dione” is defined to include moieties having structure (NPD):



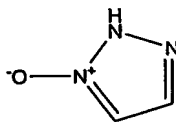
(NPD)

[0076] The term “triazole” is defined to include moieties having structure (TA):



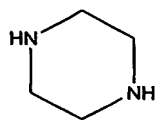
(TA)

[0077] The term “triazole-N-oxide” is defined to include moieties having structure (TANO):



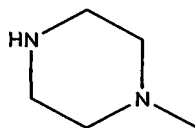
(TANO)

[0078] The term “piperazine” is defined to include moieties having structure (PP):



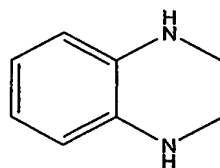
(PP)

[0079] The term “piperazinyI” is defined to include moieties having structure (PPI):



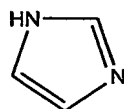
(PPI)

[0080] The term “benzopiperazine” is defined to include moieties having structure (BPP):



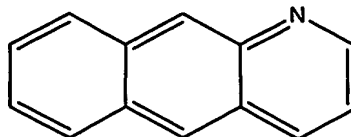
(BPP)

[0081] The term “imidazole” is defined to include moieties having structure (IAZ):



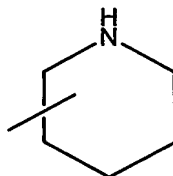
(IAZ)

[0082] The term “azaanthracene” is defined to include moieties having structure (AA):



(AA)

[0083] The term “piperidyl” is defined to include moieties having structure (PP):



(PP)

[0084] The term “effective amount” is defined as the amount of the compound or pharmaceutical composition that will elicit the biological or medical response of a tissue, system, animal or human that is being sought by the researcher, veterinarian, medical doctor or other clinician, e.g., restoration or maintenance of vasculostasis or prevention of the compromise or loss or vasculostasis; reduction of tumor burden; reduction of morbidity and/or mortality. For example, a “therapeutically effective amount” of, e.g., an aromatic compound, with respect to the subject method of treatment, refers to an amount of the Wnt antagonist in a preparation which, when applied as part of a desired dosage regimen brings about, e.g., a change in the rate of cell proliferation and/or the state of differentiation of a cell and/or rate of survival of a cell according to clinically acceptable standards for the disorder to be treated or the cosmetic purpose.

[0085] The term “pharmaceutically acceptable” is defined as a carrier, whether diluent or excipient, that is compatible with the other ingredients of the formulation and not deleterious to the recipient thereof.

[0086] The terms "administration of a compound" or "administering a compound" is defined to include an act of providing a compound of the invention or pharmaceutical composition to the subject in need of treatment.

[0087] Certain compounds of the present invention may exist in particular geometric or stereoisomeric forms. The present invention contemplates all such compounds, including cis- and trans-isomers, R- and S-enantiomers, diastereomers, (D)-isomers, (L)-isomers, the racemic mixtures thereof, and other mixtures thereof, as falling within the scope of the invention. Additional asymmetric carbon atoms may be present in a substituent such as an alkyl group. All such isomers, as well as mixtures thereof, are intended to be included in this invention.

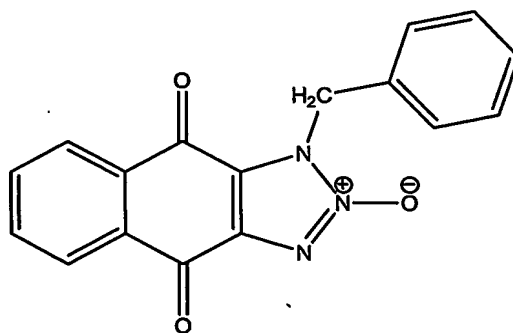
[0088] If, for instance, a particular enantiomer of a compound of the present invention is desired, it may be prepared by asymmetric synthesis, or by derivation with a chiral auxiliary, where the resulting diastereomeric mixture is separated and the auxiliary group cleaved to provide the pure desired enantiomers. Alternatively, where the molecule contains a basic functional group, such as amino, or an acidic functional group, such as carboxyl, diastereomeric salts may be formed with an appropriate optically active acid or base, followed by resolution of the diastereomers thus formed by fractional crystallization or chromatographic means well known in the art, and subsequent recovery of the pure enantiomers.

[0089] Contemplated equivalents of the compounds described above include compounds which otherwise correspond thereto, and which have the same general properties thereof (e.g., the ability to inhibit signal transduction pathways), wherein one or more simple variations of substituents are made which do not adversely affect the efficacy of the compound. In general, the compounds of the present invention may be prepared by the methods known in the art, or by modifications thereof, using readily available starting materials, reagents and conventional synthesis procedures. In these reactions, it is also possible to make use of variants which are in themselves known, but are not mentioned here.

[0090] As described in further detail below, it is contemplated that the subject methods can be carried out using a variety of different aromatic compounds, which can be readily identified, e.g., by such drug screening assays as described herein.

[0091] According to an embodiment of the invention, a first type of compounds is provided for treatment of various diseases, disorders, and pathologies. The compounds of the first type can include a first aromatic moiety fused to a second aromatic moiety, wherein the first aromatic moiety can be naphthalene-1,4-dione moiety and the second aromatic moiety can be an N-substituted triazole-N-oxide moiety. The substituent in the N-substituted triazole-N-oxide moiety can include an alkylaryl group. One example of the alkylaryl group that can be used includes benzyl group.

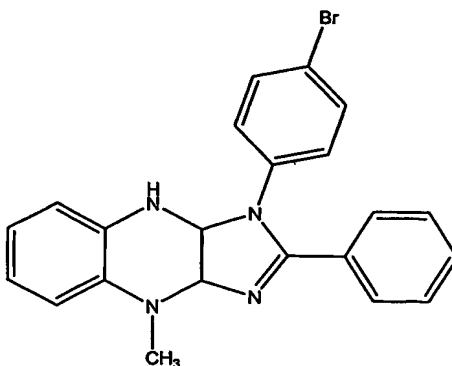
[0092] An example of a compound of the first type, that can be used, is the compound having formula (I), or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof:



(I)

[0093] According to an embodiment of the invention, a second type of compounds is provided for treatment of various diseases, disorders, and pathologies. The compounds of the second type can include a benzopiperazine moiety fused to a substituted imidazole moiety. An example of the benzopiperazine moiety that can be used includes an alkylpiperazinyl group, such as methylpiperazinyl group. An exemplary imidazole moiety that can be used includes a phenyl substituent. In addition to the phenyl substituent, the imidazole moiety can further include a halogenated aromatic group attached to a nitrogen atom in the imidazole structure, e.g., a bromophenyl group.

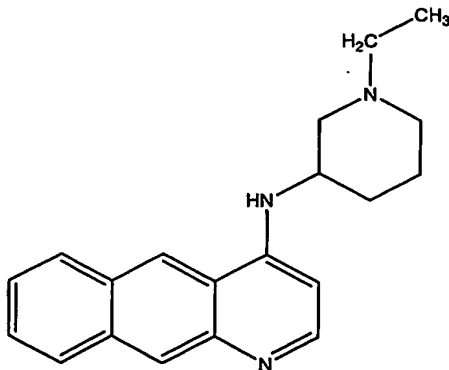
[0094] An example of a compound of the second type that can be used is the compound having the formula (II), or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof:



(II)

[0095] According to an embodiment of the invention, a third type of compounds is provided for treatment of various diseases, disorders, and pathologies. The compounds of the third type can include an azaanthracene moiety and a secondary amino moiety, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof. For example, the secondary amino moiety can be attached to the nitrogen-containing ring of the azaanthracene moiety. An exemplary secondary amino moiety can include a piperidyl group. The nitrogen of the piperidyl group can be further substituted with an alkyl group, e.g., with ethyl group.

[0096] An example of a compound of the third type that can be used is the compound having the formula (III), or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof:



(III)

[0097] The compounds described above can be prepared by methods known in the art.

[0098] In certain embodiments, the subject aromatic compounds can be chosen on the basis of their selectivity for the Wnt pathway. This selectivity can be for the Wnt pathway versus other steroid-mediated pathways (such as testosterone or estrogen mediated activities), as well as selectivity for particular Wnt pathways, e.g., which isotype specific for *Wnt*. For instance, the subject method may employ aromatic compounds that do not substantially interfere with the biological activity of such steroids as aldosterone, androstane, androstene, androstenedione, androsterone, cholecalciferol, cholestane, cholic acid, corticosterone, cortisol, cortisol acetate, cortisone, cortisone acetate, deoxycorticosterone, digitoxigenin, ergocalciferol, ergosterol, estradiol-17- α , estradiol-17- β , estriol, estrane, estrone, hydrocortisone, lanosterol, lithocholic acid, mestranol, β -methasone, prednisone, pregnane, pregnenolone, progesterone, spironolactone, testosterone, triamcinolone and their derivatives, at least so far as those activities are unrelated to Wnt-related signaling.

[0099] In one embodiment, the subject aromatic compounds for use in the present methods have a K_d for members of the nuclear hormone receptor superfamily of greater than 1 μ M, and more preferably greater than 1 mM, e.g., it does not bind estrogen, testosterone receptors or the like. In another embodiment, the subject agonist has no estrogenic activity at physiological concentrations (e.g., in the range of 1 ng - 1 mg/kg).

[0100] Thus, in one embodiment, untoward side effects that may be associated with certain members of the aromatic compounds can be reduced by, for example, using the drug screening assays described herein. The application of combinatorial and medicinal chemistry techniques to the aromatic compounds provides a means for reducing such unwanted negative side effects including personality changes, shortened life spans, cardiovascular diseases and vascular occlusion, organ toxicity, hyperglycemia and diabetes, Cushnoid features, "wasting" syndrome, steroidal glaucoma, hypertension, peptic ulcers, and increased susceptibility to infections. For certain embodiments, it will be beneficial to reduce the teratogenic activity relative to jervine, as for example, in the use of the subject method to selectively inhibit spermatogenesis.

[0101] Another aspect of the present invention relates to a method of modulating a differentiated state, survival, and/or proliferation of a cell having Wnt receptor, by contacting the cells with an aromatic compound as set forth above according to the subject method and as the circumstances may warrant.

[0102] It is contemplated by the invention that, in light of the findings of an apparently broad involvement of *Wnt* in the formation of ordered spatial arrangements of differentiated tissues in vertebrates, the subject method could be used as part of a process for generating and/or maintaining an array of different vertebrate tissue both *in vitro* and *in vivo*. The aromatic compound, whether inductive or anti-inductive with respect proliferation or differentiation of a given tissue, can be, as appropriate, any of the preparations described above.

[0103] For example, the present method of using the subject aromatic compounds is applicable to cell culture techniques wherein, whether for genetic or biochemical reasons, the cells have a Wnt receptor. Alternatively, a subject aromatic compound may be employed in a related method directed towards cells which have a Wnt receptor. *In vitro* neuronal culture systems have proven to be fundamental and indispensable tools for the study of neural development, as well as the identification of neurotrophic factors such as nerve growth factor (NGF), ciliary trophic factors (CNTF), and brain derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF). One use of the present method may be in cultures of neuronal stem cells, such as in the use of such cultures for the generation of new neurons and glia. In such embodiments of the subject method, the cultured cells can be contacted with an aromatic compound of the present invention in order to alter the rate of proliferation of neuronal stem cells in the culture and/or alter the rate of differentiation, or to maintain the integrity of a culture of certain terminally differentiated neuronal cells. In an exemplary embodiment, the subject method can be used to culture, for example, sensory neurons or, alternatively, motoneurons. Such neuronal cultures can be used as convenient assay systems as well as sources of implantable cells for therapeutic treatments.

[0104] In another embodiment, the subject method can be used in the treatment of neoplastic or hyperplastic transformations such as may occur in the central nervous system. For instance, the subject compounds can be utilized to cause such transformed cells to become either post-mitotic or apoptotic. The present method may, therefore, be used as part of a treatment for, e.g., malignant gliomas, meningiomas, medulloblastomas, neuroectodermal tumors, and ependymomas.

[0105] In another embodiment, the subject method can be used as part of a treatment regimen for malignant medulloblastoma and other primary CNS malignant neuroectodermal tumors.

[0106] In certain embodiments, the subject method is used as part of treatment program for medulloblastoma. Medulloblastoma, a primary brain tumor, is the most common brain tumor in children. A medulloblastoma is a primitive neuroectodermal tumor arising in the posterior fossa. They account for approximately 25% of all pediatric brain tumors (Miller). Histologically, they are small round cell tumors commonly arranged in true rosettes, but may display some differentiation to astrocytes, ependymal cells or neurons (Rorke; Kleihues). PNET's may arise in other areas of the brain including the pineal gland (pineoblastoma) and cerebrum. Those arising in the supratentorial region generally fare worse than their PF counterparts.

[0107] Medulloblastoma/PNET's are known to recur anywhere in the CNS after resection, and can even metastasize to bone. Pretreatment evaluation should therefore include an examination of the spinal cord to exclude the possibility of "dropped metastases". Gadolinium-enhanced MRI has largely replaced myelography for this purpose, and CSF cytology is obtained postoperatively as a routine procedure.

[0108] In other embodiments, the subject method is used as part of a treatment program for hepatocellular carcinoma. Hepatocellular carcinoma is a form of cancer that arises from hepatocytes, the major cell type of the liver, and is one of the most common tumors involving mutations in the Wnt pathway.

[0109] In other embodiments, the subject method is used as part of treatment program for ependymomas. Ependymomas account for approximately 10% of the pediatric brain tumors in children. Grossly, they are tumors that arise from the ependymal lining of the ventricles and microscopically form rosettes, canals, and perivascular rosettes. In the CHOP series of 51 children reported with ependymomas, 3/4 were histologically benign. Approximately 2/3 arose from the region of the 4th ventricle. One third presented in the supratentorial region. Age at presentation peaks between birth and 4 years, as demonstrated by SEER data as well as data from CHOP. The median age is about 5 years. Because so many children with this disease are babies, they often require multimodal therapy.

[0110] Yet another aspect of the present invention concerns the observation in the art that *Wnt* is involved in morphogenic signals involved in other vertebrate organogenic pathways in addition to neuronal differentiation as described above, having apparent roles in other endodermal patterning, as well as both mesodermal and endodermal differentiation processes. Thus, it is contemplated by the invention that compositions comprising one or more of the subject compounds can also be utilized for both cell culture and therapeutic methods involving generation and maintenance of non-neuronal tissue.

[0111] In one embodiment, the present invention makes use of the discovery that *Wnt* is apparently involved in controlling the development of stem cells responsible for formation of the digestive tract, liver, lungs, and other organs which derive from the primitive gut. Shh serves as an inductive signal from the endoderm to the mesoderm, which is critical to gut morphogenesis. Therefore, for example, compounds of the instant method can be employed for regulating the development and maintenance of an artificial liver which can have multiple metabolic functions of a normal liver. In an exemplary embodiment, the subject method can be used to regulate the proliferation and differentiation of digestive tube stem cells to form hepatocyte cultures which can be used to populate extracellular matrices, or which can be encapsulated in biocompatible polymers, to form both implantable and extracorporeal artificial livers.

[0112] In another embodiment, therapeutic compositions of subject compounds can be utilized in conjunction with transplantation of such artificial livers, as well as embryonic liver structures, to regulate uptake of intraperitoneal implantation, vascularization, and *in vivo* differentiation and maintenance of the engrafted liver tissue.

[0113] In yet another embodiment, the subject method can be employed therapeutically to regulate such organs after physical, chemical or pathological insult. For instance, therapeutic compositions comprising subject compounds can be utilized in liver repair subsequent to a partial hepatectomy.

[0114] The generation of the pancreas and small intestine from the embryonic gut depends on intercellular signalling between the endodermal and mesodermal cells of the gut. In particular, the differentiation of intestinal mesoderm into smooth muscle has been suggested to depend on signals from adjacent endodermal cells. One candidate mediator of endodermally derived signals in the embryonic hindgut is Sonic hedgehog. See, for example, Apelqvist et al., *Curr. Biol.* 7:801-4 (1997). The Shh gene is expressed throughout the embryonic gut endoderm with the exception of the pancreatic bud endoderm, which instead expresses high levels of the homeodomain protein Ipfl/Pdx1 (insulin promoter factor 1/pancreatic and duodenal homeobox 1), an essential regulator of early pancreatic development. Apelqvist et al., supra, have examined whether the differential expression of Shh in the embryonic gut tube controls the differentiation of the surrounding mesoderm into specialised mesoderm derivatives of the small intestine and pancreas. To test this, they used the promoter of the Ipfl/Pdx1 gene to selectively express Shh in the developing pancreatic epithelium. In Ipfl/Pdx1-Shh transgenic mice, the pancreatic mesoderm developed into smooth muscle and interstitial cells of Cajal, characteristic of the intestine, rather than into pancreatic mesenchyme and spleen. Also, pancreatic explants exposed to Shh underwent a similar program of intestinal differentiation. These results provide evidence that the differential expression of endodermally derived Shh controls the fate of adjacent mesoderm at different regions of the gut tube.

[0115] In the context of the present invention, it is contemplated therefore that the subject compounds can be used to control or regulate the proliferation and/or differentiation of pancreatic tissue both *in vivo* and *in vitro*.

[0116] There are a wide variety of pathological cell proliferative and differentiative conditions for which the aromatic compounds of the present invention may provide therapeutic benefits, with the general strategy being, for example, the correction of aberrant insulin expression, or modulation of differentiation. More generally, however, the present invention relates to a method of inducing and/or maintaining a differentiated state, enhancing survival and/or affecting proliferation of pancreatic cells, by contacting the cells with the subject inhibitors. For instance, it is contemplated by the invention that, in light of the apparent involvement of *Wnt* in the formation of ordered spatial arrangements of pancreatic tissues, the subject method could be used as part of a technique to generate and/or maintain such tissue both *in vitro* and *in vivo*. For instance, modulation of the function of *Wnt* can be employed in both cell culture and therapeutic methods involving generation and maintenance β -cells and possibly also for non-pancreatic tissue, such as in controlling the development and maintenance of tissue from the digestive tract, spleen, lungs, colon, and other organs which derive from the primitive gut.

[0117] In an exemplary embodiment, the present method can be used in the treatment of hyperplastic and neoplastic disorders effecting pancreatic tissue, particularly those characterized by aberrant proliferation of pancreatic cells. For instance, pancreatic cancers are marked by abnormal proliferation of pancreatic cells which can result in alterations of insulin secretory capacity of the pancreas. For instance, certain pancreatic hyperplasias, such as pancreatic carcinomas, can result in hypoinsulinemia due to dysfunction of β -cells or decreased islet cell mass. To the extent that aberrant *Wnt* signaling may be indicated in disease progression, the subject aromatic compounds can be used to enhance regeneration of the tissue after anti-tumor therapy.

[0118] Moreover, manipulation of *Wnt* signaling properties at different points may be useful as part of a strategy for reshaping/repairing pancreatic tissue both *in vivo* and *in*

vitro. In one embodiment, the present invention makes use of the apparent involvement of *Wnt* in regulating the development of pancreatic tissue. In general, the subject method can be employed therapeutically to regulate the pancreas after physical, chemical or pathological insult. In yet another embodiment, the subject method can be applied to cell culture techniques, and in particular, may be employed to enhance the initial generation of prosthetic pancreatic tissue devices. Manipulation of proliferation and differentiation of pancreatic tissue, for example, by altering *Wnt*, can provide a means for more carefully controlling the characteristics of a cultured tissue. In an exemplary embodiment, the subject method can be used to augment production of prosthetic devices which require β -islet cells, such as may be used in the encapsulation devices described in, for example, the Aebischer et al. U.S. Pat. No. 4,892,538, the Aebischer et al. U.S. Pat. No. 5,106,627, the Lim U.S. Pat. No. 4,391,909, and the Sefton U.S. Pat. No. 4,353,888. Early progenitor cells to the pancreatic islets are multipotential, and apparently coactivate all the islet-specific genes from the time they first appear. As development proceeds, expression of islet-specific hormones, such as insulin, becomes restricted to the pattern of expression characteristic of mature islet cells. The phenotype of mature islet cells, however, is not stable in culture, as reappearance of embryonal traits in mature β -cells can be observed. By utilizing the subject compounds, the differentiation path or proliferative index of the cells can be regulated.

[0119] Furthermore, manipulation of the differentiative state of pancreatic tissue can be utilized in conjunction with transplantation of artificial pancreas so as to promote implantation, vascularization, and *in vivo* differentiation and maintenance of the engrafted tissue. For instance, manipulation of *Wnt* function to affect tissue differentiation can be utilized as a means of maintaining graft viability.

[0120] Bellusci et al., *Development* 124:53 (1997) report that Sonic hedgehog regulates lung mesenchymal cell proliferation *in vivo*. Accordingly, the present method can be used to regulate regeneration of lung tissue, e.g., in the treatment of emphysema.

[0121] Fujita et al., *Biochem. Biophys. Res. Commun.* 238:658 (1997) reported that Sonic hedgehog is expressed in human lung squamous carcinoma and adenocarcinoma

cells. The expression of Sonic hedgehog was also detected in the human lung squamous carcinoma tissues, but not in the normal lung tissue of the same patient. They also observed that Sonic hedgehog stimulates the incorporation of BrdU into the carcinoma cells and stimulates their cell growth, while anti-Shh-N inhibited their cell growth. These results suggest that *ptc* and/or *Wnt* is involved in the cell growth of such transformed lung tissue and therefore indicates that the subject method can be used as part of a treatment of lung carcinoma and adenocarcinomas, and other proliferative disorders involving the lung epithelia.

[0122] Many other tumors may, based on evidence such as involvement of the Wnt pathway in these tumors, or detected expression of *Wnt* or its receptors in these tissues during development, be affected by treatment with the subject aromatic compounds. Such tumors include, but are by no means limited to, tumors related to Gorlin's syndrome (e.g., basal cell carcinoma, medulloblastoma, meningioma, etc.), tumors evidenced in *pct* knock-out mice (e.g., hemangioma, rhabdomyosarcoma, etc.), tumors resulting from *gli-1* amplification (e.g., glioblastoma, sarcoma, etc.), tumors connected with TRC8, a *ptc* homolog (e.g., renal carcinoma, thyroid carcinoma, etc.), Ext-1-related tumors (e.g., bone cancer, etc.), Shh-induced tumors (e.g., lung cancer, chondrosarcomas, etc.), and other tumors (e.g., breast cancer, urogenital cancer (e.g., kidney, bladder, ureter, prostate, etc.), adrenal cancer, gastrointestinal cancer (e.g., stomach, intestine, etc.), etc.).

[0123] In still another embodiment of the present invention, compositions comprising one or more of the subject compounds can be used in the *in vitro* generation of skeletal tissue, such as from skeletogenic stem cells, as well as the *in vivo* treatment of skeletal tissue deficiencies. The present invention particularly contemplates the use of subject compounds to regulate the rate of chondrogenesis and/or osteogenesis. By "skeletal tissue deficiency", it is meant a deficiency in bone or other skeletal connective tissue at any site where it is desired to restore the bone or connective tissue, no matter how the deficiency originated, e.g. whether as a result of surgical intervention, removal of tumor, ulceration, implant, fracture, or other traumatic or degenerative conditions.

[0124] For instance, the methods of the present invention can be used as part of a regimen for restoring cartilage function to a connective tissue. Such methods are useful in, for example, the repair of defects or lesions in cartilage tissue which is the result of degenerative wear such as that which results in arthritis, as well as other mechanical derangements which may be caused by trauma to the tissue, such as a displacement of torn meniscus tissue, meniscectomy, a laxation of a joint by a torn ligament, malignment of joints, bone fracture, or by hereditary disease. The present reparative method is also useful for remodeling cartilage matrix, such as in plastic or reconstructive surgery, as well as periodontal surgery. The present method may also be applied to improving a previous reparative procedure, for example, following surgical repair of a meniscus, ligament, or cartilage. Furthermore, it may prevent the onset or exacerbation of degenerative disease if applied early enough after trauma.

[0125] In one embodiment of the present invention, the subject method comprises treating the afflicted connective tissue with a therapeutically effective amount of a subject aromatic compound to regulate a cartilage repair response in the connective tissue by managing the rate of differentiation and/or proliferation of chondrocytes embedded in the tissue. Such connective tissues as articular cartilage, interarticular cartilage (menisci), costal cartilage (connecting the true ribs and the sternum), ligaments, and tendons are particularly amenable to treatment in reconstructive and/or regenerative therapies using the subject method. As used herein, regenerative therapies include treatment of degenerative states which have progressed to the point of which impairment of the tissue is obviously manifest, as well as preventive treatments of tissue where degeneration is in its earliest stages or imminent.

[0126] In an illustrative embodiment, the subject method can be used as part of a therapeutic intervention in the treatment of cartilage of a diarthroidal joint, such as a knee, an ankle, an elbow, a hip, a wrist, a knuckle of either a finger or toe, or a tempomandibular joint. The treatment can be directed to the meniscus of the joint, to the articular cartilage of the joint, or both. To further illustrate, the subject method can be used to treat a degenerative disorder of a knee, such as which might be the result of traumatic injury (e.g., a sports injury or excessive wear) or osteoarthritis. The subject

regulators may be administered as an injection into the joint with, for instance, an arthroscopic needle. In some instances, the injected agent can be in the form of a hydrogel or other slow release vehicle described above in order to permit a more extended and regular contact of the agent with the treated tissue.

[0127] The present invention further contemplates the use of the subject methods in the field of cartilage transplantation and prosthetic device therapies. However, problems arise, for instance, because the characteristics of cartilage and fibrocartilage varies between different tissue: such as between articular, meniscal cartilage, ligaments, and tendons, between the two ends of the same ligament or tendon, and between the superficial and deep parts of the tissue. The zonal arrangement of these tissues may reflect a gradual change in mechanical properties, and failure occurs when implanted tissue, which has not differentiated under those conditions, lacks the ability to appropriately respond. For instance, when meniscal cartilage is used to repair anterior cruciate ligaments, the tissue undergoes a metaplasia to pure fibrous tissue. By regulating the rate of chondrogenesis, the subject method can be used to particularly address this problem, by helping to adaptively control the implanted cells in the new environment and effectively resemble hypertrophic chondrocytes of an earlier developmental stage of the tissue.

[0128] In similar fashion, the subject method can be applied to enhancing both the generation of prosthetic cartilage devices and to their implantation. The need for improved treatment has motivated research aimed at creating new cartilage that is based on collagen-glycosaminoglycan templates (Stone et al., *Clin. Orthop. Relat. Res.* 252:129 (1990)), isolated chondrocytes (Grande et al., *J. Orthop. Res.* 7:208 (1989); and Takigawa et al., *Bone Miner* 2:449 (1987)), and chondrocytes attached to natural or synthetic polymers (Walitani et al., *J. Bone Jt. Surg.* 71B:74 (1989); Vacanti et al., *Plast. Reconstr. Surg.* 88:753 (1991); von Schroeder et al. *J. Biomed. Mater. Res.* 25:329 (1991); Freed et al., *J. Biomed. Mater. Res.* 27:11(1993); and the Vacanti et al. U.S. Pat. No. 5,041,138). For example, chondrocytes can be grown in culture on biodegradable, biocompatible highly porous scaffolds formed from polymers such as polyglycolic acid, polylactic acid, agarose gel, or other polymers which degrade over time as function of hydrolysis of the

polymer backbone into innocuous monomers. The matrices are designed to allow adequate nutrient and gas exchange to the cells until engraftment occurs. The cells can be cultured *in vitro* until adequate cell volume and density has developed for the cells to be implanted. One advantage of the matrices is that they can be cast or molded into a desired shape on an individual basis, so that the final product closely resembles the patient's own ear or nose (by way of example), or flexible matrices can be used which allow for manipulation at the time of implantation, as in a joint.

[0129] In one embodiment of the subject method, the implants are contacted with a subject aromatic compound during certain stages of the culturing process in order to manage the rate of differentiation of chondrocytes and the formation of hypertrophic chondrocytes in the culture.

[0130] In another embodiment, the implanted device is treated with a subject aromatic compound in order to actively remodel the implanted matrix and to make it more suitable for its intended function. As set out above with respect to tissue transplants, the artificial transplants suffer from the same deficiency of not being derived in a setting which is comparable to the actual mechanical environment in which the matrix is implanted. The ability to regulate the chondrocytes in the matrix by the subject method can allow the implant to acquire characteristics similar to the tissue for which it is intended to replace.

[0131] In yet another embodiment, the subject method is used to enhance attachment of prosthetic devices. To illustrate, the subject method can be used in the implantation of a periodontal prosthesis, wherein the treatment of the surrounding connective tissue stimulates formation of periodontal ligament about the prosthesis.

[0132] In other embodiments, the subject methods can be employed as part of a regimen for the generation of bone (osteogenesis) at a site in the animal where such skeletal tissue is deficient. Indian hedgehog (Ihh) is particularly associated with the hypertrophic chondrocytes that are ultimately replaced by osteoblasts. For instance, administration of a compound of the present invention can be employed as part of a method for regulating the rate of bone loss in a subject. For example, preparations

comprising subject compounds can be employed, for example, to control endochondral ossification in the formation of a "model" for ossification.

[0133] The subject method also has wide applicability to the treatment or prophylaxis of disorders afflicting epithelial tissue, as well as in cosmetic uses. In general, the method can be characterized as including a step of administering to an animal an amount of a subject aromatic compound effective to alter the growth state of a treated epithelial tissue. The mode of administration and dosage regimens will vary depending on the epithelial tissue(s) which is to be treated. For example, topical formulations will be preferred where the treated tissue is epidermal tissue, such as dermal or mucosal tissues.

[0134] A method which "promotes the healing of a wound" results in the wound healing more quickly as a result of the treatment than a similar wound heals in the absence of the treatment. "Promotion of wound healing" can also mean that the method regulates the proliferation and/or growth of, *inter alia*, keratinocytes, or that the wound heals with less scarring, less wound contraction, less collagen deposition and more superficial surface area. In certain instances, "promotion of wound healing" can also mean that certain methods of wound healing have improved success rates, (e.g., the take rates of skin grafts) when used together with the method of the present invention.

[0135] Despite significant progress in reconstructive surgical techniques, scarring can be an important obstacle in regaining normal function and appearance of healed skin. This is particularly true when pathologic scarring such as keloids or hypertrophic scars of the hands or face causes functional disability or physical deformity. In the severest circumstances, such scarring may precipitate psychosocial distress and a life of economic deprivation. Wound repair includes the stages of hemostasis, inflammation, proliferation, and remodeling. The proliferative stage involves multiplication of fibroblasts and endothelial and epithelial cells. Through the use of the subject method, the rate of proliferation of epithelial cells in and proximal to the wound can be controlled in order to accelerate closure of the wound and/or minimize the formation of scar tissue.

[0136] The present treatment can also be effective as part of a therapeutic regimen for treating oral and paraoral ulcers, e.g., resulting from radiation and/or chemotherapy. Such

ulcers commonly develop within days after chemotherapy or radiation therapy. These ulcers usually begin as small, painful irregularly shaped lesions usually covered by a delicate gray necrotic membrane and surrounded by inflammatory tissue. In many instances, lack of treatment results in proliferation of tissue around the periphery of the lesion on an inflammatory basis. For instance, the epithelium bordering the ulcer usually demonstrates proliferative activity, resulting in loss of continuity of surface epithelium. These lesions, because of their size and loss of epithelial integrity, dispose the body to potential secondary infection. Routine ingestion of food and water becomes a very painful event and, if the ulcers proliferate throughout the alimentary canal, diarrhea usually is evident with all its complicating factors. According to the present invention, a treatment for such ulcers which includes application of a subject compound can reduce the abnormal proliferation and differentiation of the affected epithelium, helping to reduce the severity of subsequent inflammatory events.

[0137] The subject method and compositions can also be used to treat wounds resulting from dermatological diseases, such as lesions resulting from autoimmune disorders such as psoriasis. Atopic dermatitis refers to skin trauma resulting from allergies associated with an immune response caused by allergens such as pollens, foods, dander, insect venoms and plant toxins.

[0138] In other embodiments, antiproliferative preparations of subject compounds can be used to inhibit lens epithelial cell proliferation to prevent post-operative complications of extracapsular cataract extraction. Cataract is an intractable eye disease and various studies on a treatment of cataract have been made. But at present, the treatment of cataract is attained by surgical operations. Cataract surgery has been applied for a long time and various operative methods have been examined. Extracapsular lens extraction has become the method of choice for removing cataracts. The major medical advantages of this technique over intracapsular extraction are lower incidence of aphakic cystoid macular edema and retinal detachment. Extracapsular extraction is also required for implantation of posterior chamber type intraocular lenses which are now considered to be the lenses of choice in most cases.

[0139] However, a disadvantage of extracapsular cataract extraction is the high incidence of posterior lens capsule opacification, often called after-cataract, which can occur in up to 50% of cases within three years after surgery. After-cataract is caused by proliferation of equatorial and anterior capsule lens epithelial cells which remain after extracapsular lens extraction. These cells proliferate to cause Sommerling rings, and along with fibroblasts which also deposit and occur on the posterior capsule, cause opacification of the posterior capsule, which interferes with vision. Prevention of after-cataract would be preferable to treatment. To inhibit secondary cataract formation, the subject method provides a means for inhibiting proliferation of the remaining lens epithelial cells. For example, such cells can be induced to remain quiescent by instilling a solution containing a preparation of a subject compound into the anterior chamber of the eye after lens removal. Furthermore, the solution can be osmotically balanced to provide minimal effective dosage when instilled into the anterior chamber of the eye, thereby inhibiting subcapsular epithelial growth with some specificity.

[0140] The subject methods can also be used in the treatment of corneopathies marked by corneal epithelial cell proliferation, as for example in ocular epithelial disorders such as epithelial downgrowth or squamous cell carcinomas of the ocular surface.

[0141] Yet another aspect of the present invention relates to the use of the subject methods to control hair growth. Hair is basically composed of keratin, a tough and insoluble protein; its chief strength lies in its disulphide bond of cystine. Each individual hair comprises a cylindrical shaft and a root, and is contained in a follicle, a flask-like depression in the skin. The bottom of the follicle contains a finger-like projection termed the papilla, which consists of connective tissue from which hair grows, and through which blood vessels supply the cells with nourishment. The shaft is the part that extends outwards from the skin surface, whilst the root has been described as the buried part of the hair. The base of the root expands into the hair bulb, which rests upon the papilla. Cells from which the hair is produced grow in the bulb of the follicle; they are extruded in the form of fibers as the cells proliferate in the follicle. Hair "growth" refers to the formation and elongation of the hair fiber by the dividing cells.

[0142] As is well known in the art, the common hair cycle is divided into three stages: anagen, catagen and telogen. During the active phase (anagen), the epidermal stem cells of the dermal papilla divide rapidly. Daughter cells move upward and differentiate to form the concentric layers of the hair itself. The transitional stage, catagen, is marked by the cessation of mitosis of the stem cells in the follicle. The resting stage is known as telogen, where the hair is retained within the scalp for several weeks before an emerging new hair developing below it dislodges the telogen-phase shaft from its follicle. From this model it has become clear that the larger the pool of dividing stem cells that differentiate into hair cells, the more hair growth occurs. Accordingly, methods for increasing or reducing hair growth can be carried out by potentiating or inhibiting, respectively, the proliferation of these stem cells.

[0143] In certain embodiments, the subject methods can be employed as a way of reducing the growth of human hair as opposed to its conventional removal by cutting, shaving, or depilation. For instance, the present method can be used in the treatment of trichosis characterized by abnormally rapid or dense growth of hair, e.g. hypertrichosis. In an exemplary embodiment, subject compounds can be used to manage hirsutism, a disorder marked by abnormal hairiness. The subject method can also provide a process for extending the duration of depilation.

[0144] Moreover, because a subject compound will often be cytostatic to epithelial cells, rather than cytotoxic, such agents can be used to protect hair follicle cells from cytotoxic agents which require progression into S-phase of the cell-cycle for efficacy, e.g. radiation-induced death. Treatment by the subject method can provide protection by causing the hair follicle cells to become quiescent, e.g., by inhibiting the cells from entering S phase, and thereby preventing the follicle cells from undergoing mitotic catastrophe or programmed cell death. For instance, subject compounds can be used for patients undergoing chemo- or radiation-therapies which ordinarily result in hair loss. By inhibiting cell-cycle progression during such therapies, the subject treatment can protect hair follicle cells from death which might otherwise result from activation of cell death programs. After the therapy has concluded, the instant method can also be removed with concomitant relief of the inhibition of follicle cell proliferation.

[0145] The subject method can also be used in the treatment of folliculitis, such as folliculitis decalvans, folliculitis ulerythematosus reticulata or keloid folliculitis. For example, a cosmetic preparation of a subject compound can be applied topically in the treatment of pseudofolliculitis, a chronic disorder occurring most often in the submandibular region of the neck and associated with shaving, the characteristic lesions of which are erythematous papules and pustules containing buried hairs.

[0146] In another aspect of the invention, the subject method can be used to induce differentiation and/or inhibit proliferation of epithelially derived tissue. Such forms of these molecules can provide a basis for differentiation therapy for the treatment of hyperplastic and/or neoplastic conditions involving epithelial tissue. For example, such preparations can be used for the treatment of cutaneous diseases in which there is abnormal proliferation or growth of cells of the skin.

[0147] For instance, the pharmaceutical preparations of the invention are intended for the treatment of hyperplastic epidermal conditions, such as keratosis, as well as for the treatment of neoplastic epidermal conditions such as those characterized by a high proliferation rate for various skin cancers, as for example basal cell carcinoma or squamous cell carcinoma. The subject method can also be used in the treatment of autoimmune diseases affecting the skin, in particular, of dermatological diseases involving morbid proliferation and/or keratinization of the epidermis, as for example, caused by psoriasis or atopic dermatosis.

[0148] Many common diseases of the skin, such as psoriasis, squamous cell carcinoma, keratoacanthoma and actinic keratosis are characterized by localized abnormal proliferation and growth. For example, in psoriasis, which is characterized by scaly, red, elevated plaques on the skin, the keratinocytes are known to proliferate much more rapidly than normal and to differentiate less completely.

[0149] In one embodiment, the preparations of the present invention are suitable for the treatment of dermatological ailments linked to keratinization disorders causing abnormal proliferation of skin cells, which disorders may be marked by either inflammatory or non-inflammatory components. To illustrate, therapeutic preparations of

a subject compound, e.g., which promotes quiescence or differentiation, can be used to treat varying forms of psoriasis, be they cutaneous, mucosal or ungual. Psoriasis, as described above, is typically characterized by epidermal keratinocytes which display marked proliferative activation and differentiation along a "regenerative" pathway. Treatment with an antiproliferative embodiment of the subject method can be used to reverse the pathological epidermal activation and can provide a basis for sustained remission of the disease.

[0150] A variety of other keratotic lesions are also candidates for treatment with the subject method. Actinic keratoses, for example, are superficial inflammatory premalignant tumors arising on sun-exposed and irradiated skin. The lesions are erythematous to brown with variable scaling. Current therapies include excisional and cryosurgery. These treatments are painful, however, and often produce cosmetically unacceptable scarring. Accordingly, treatment of keratosis, such as actinic keratosis, can include application, preferably topical, of a subject compound composition in amounts sufficient to inhibit hyperproliferation of epidermal/epidermoid cells of the lesion.

[0151] Acne represents yet another dermatologic ailment which may be treated by the subject method. Acne vulgaris, for instance, is a multifactorial disease most commonly occurring in teenagers and young adults, and is characterized by the appearance of inflammatory and noninflammatory lesions on the face and upper trunk. The basic defect which gives rise to acne vulgaris is hypercornification of the duct of a hyperactive sebaceous gland. Hypercornification blocks the normal mobility of skin and follicle microorganisms, and in so doing, stimulates the release of lipases by *Propionibacterium acnes* and *Staphylococcus epidermidis* bacteria and *Pitrosporum ovale*, a yeast. Treatment with an antiproliferative subject compound, particularly topical preparations, may be useful for preventing the transitional features of the ducts, e.g. hypercornification, which lead to lesion formation. The subject treatment may further include, for example, antibiotics, retinoids and antiandrogens.

[0152] The present invention also provides a method for treating various forms of dermatitis. Dermatitis is a descriptive term referring to poorly demarcated lesions which

are either pruritic, erythematous, scaly, blistered, weeping, fissured or crusted. These lesions arise from any of a wide variety of causes. The most common types of dermatitis are atopic, contact and diaper dermatitis. For instance, seborrheic dermatitis is a chronic, usually pruritic, dermatitis with erythema, dry, moist, or greasy scaling, and yellow crusted patches on various areas, especially the scalp, with exfoliation of an excessive amount of dry scales. The subject method can also be used in the treatment of stasis dermatitis, an often chronic, usually eczematous dermatitis. Actinic dermatitis is dermatitis that due to exposure to actinic radiation such as that from the sun, ultraviolet waves or x- or gamma-radiation. According to the present invention, the subject method can be used in the treatment and/or prevention of certain symptoms of dermatitis caused by unwanted proliferation of epithelial cells. Such therapies for these various forms of dermatitis can also include topical and systemic corticosteroids, antipruritics, and antibiotics.

[0153] Ailments which may be treated by the subject method are disorders specific to non-humans, such as mange.

[0154] In still another embodiment, the subject method can be used in the treatment of human cancers, particularly basal cell carcinomas and other tumors of epithelial tissues such as the skin. For example, subject compounds can be employed, in the subject method, as part of a treatment for basal cell nevus syndrome (BCNS), and other human carcinomas, adenocarcinomas, sarcomas and the like.

[0155] In another embodiment, the subject method is used as part of a treatment of prophylaxis regimen for treating (or preventing) basal cell carcinoma. The deregulation of the Wnt signaling pathway may be a general feature of basal cell carcinomas caused by *ptc* mutations. Consistent overexpression of human *ptc* mRNA has been described in tumors of familial and sporadic BCCs, determined by *in situ* hybridization. Mutations that inactivate *ptc* may be expected to result in overexpression of mutant *Ptc*, because *ptc* displays negative autoregulation. Likewise, mutations that inactivate *Wnt* may be expected to result in overexpression of mutant *Wnt*, because *Wnt* displays negative autoregulation. Prior research demonstrates that overexpression of hedgehog proteins can

also lead to tumorigenesis. That sonic hedgehog (Shh) has a role in tumorigenesis in the mouse has been suggested by research in which transgenic mice overexpressing Shh in the skin developed features of BCNS, including multiple BCC-like epidermal proliferations over the entire skin surface, after only a few days of skin development. A mutation in the Shh human gene from a BCC was also described; it was suggested that Wnt, Shh or other Hh genes in humans could act as dominant oncogenes in humans. Sporadic *ptc* mutations have also been observed in BCCs from otherwise normal individuals, some of which are UV-signature mutations. In one recent study of sporadic BCCs, five UV-signature type mutations, either CT or CCTT changes, were found out of fifteen tumors determined to contain *ptc* mutations. Another recent analysis of sporadic *ptc* mutations in BCCs and neuroectodermal tumors revealed one CT change in one of three *ptc* mutations found in the BCCs. See, for example, Goodrich et al., *Science* 277:1109-13 (1997); Xie et al., *Cancer Res.* 57:2369-72 (1997); Oro et al., *Science* 276:817-21 (1997); Xie et al., *Genes Chromosomes Cancer* 18:305-9 (1997); Stone et al., *Nature* 384:129-34 (1996); and Johnson et al., *Science* 272:1668-71 (1996).

[0156] The subject method can also be used to treat patients with BCNS, e.g., to prevent BCC or other effects of the disease which may be the result of *Wnt*-mediated disorders. Basal cell nevus syndrome is a rare autosomal dominant disorder characterized by multiple BCCs that appear at a young age. BCNS patients are very susceptible to the development of these tumors; in the second decade of life, large numbers appear, mainly on sun-exposed areas of the skin. This disease also causes a number of developmental abnormalities, including rib, head and face alterations, and sometimes polydactyly, syndactyly, and spina bifida. They also develop a number of tumor types in addition to BCCs: fibromas of the ovaries and heart, cysts of the skin and jaws, and in the central nervous system, medulloblastomas and meningiomas. The subject methods can be used to prevent or treat such tumor types in BCNS and non-BCNS patients. Studies of BCNS patients show that they have both genomic and sporadic mutations in the *ptc* gene, suggesting that these mutations are the ultimate cause of this disease.

[0157] In another aspect, the present invention provides pharmaceutical preparations and methods for controlling the formation of megakaryocyte-derived cells and/or

controlling the functional performance of megakaryocyte-derived cells. For instance, certain of the compositions disclosed herein may be applied to the treatment or prevention of a variety hyperplastic or neoplastic conditions affecting platelets.

[0158] It will be apparent to one of ordinary skill that certain instances described above may respond favorably to administration of a Wnt agonist or antagonist, depending on the particular effect on the Wnt pathway desired. For example, although a Wnt agonist may be useful in maintaining a culture of undifferentiated stem cells, a Wnt antagonist may be employed to maintain a differentiation state in a culture of differentiated cells. Such methods are considered to fall within the scope of the present invention.

[0159] In another aspect, the present invention provides pharmaceutical preparations comprising the subject aromatic compounds. The aromatic compounds for use in the subject method may be conveniently formulated for administration with a pharmaceutically acceptable and/or sterile medium, such as water, buffered saline, polyol (for example, glycerol, propylene glycol, liquid polyethylene glycol and the like) or suitable mixtures thereof. The optimum concentration of the active ingredient(s) in the chosen medium can be determined empirically, according to procedures well known to medicinal chemists. As used herein, "biologically acceptable medium" includes any and all solvents, dispersion media, and the like which may be appropriate for the desired route of administration of the pharmaceutical preparation. The use of such media for pharmaceutically active substances is known in the art. Except insofar as any conventional media or agent is incompatible with the activity of the subject compounds, its use in the pharmaceutical preparation of the invention is contemplated. Suitable vehicles and their formulation inclusive of other proteins are described, for example, in the book Remington's Pharmaceutical Sciences (Remington's Pharmaceutical Sciences. Mack Publishing Company, Easton, Pa., USA 1985). These vehicles include injectable "deposit formulations".

[0160] Pharmaceutical formulations of the present invention can also include veterinary compositions, e.g., pharmaceutical preparations of the subject compounds

suitable for veterinary uses, e.g., for the treatment of live stock or domestic animals, e.g., dogs.

[0161] Methods of introduction may also be provided by rechargeable or biodegradable devices. Various slow release polymeric devices have been developed and tested *in vivo* in recent years for the controlled delivery of drugs, including proteinacious biopharmaceuticals. A variety of biocompatible polymers (including hydrogels), including both biodegradable and non-degradable polymers, can be used to form an implant for the sustained release of a subject compound at a particular target site.

[0162] The preparations of the present invention may be given orally, parenterally, topically, or rectally. They are of course given by forms suitable for each administration route. For example, they are administered in tablets or capsule form, by injection, inhalation, eye lotion, ointment, suppository, controlled release patch, etc. administration by injection, infusion or inhalation; topical by lotion or ointment; and rectal by suppositories. Oral and topical administrations are preferred.

[0163] The phrases "parenteral administration" and "administered parenterally" as used herein means modes of administration other than enteral and topical administration, usually by injection, and includes, without limitation, intravenous, intramuscular, intraarterial, intrathecal, intracapsular, intraorbital, intracardiac, intradermal, intraperitoneal, transtracheal, subcutaneous, subcuticular, intraarticular, subcapsular, subarachnoid, intraspinal and intrasternal injection and infusion.

[0164] The phrases "systemic administration," "administered systemically," "peripheral administration" and "administered peripherally" as used herein mean the administration of a compound, drug or other material other than directly into the central nervous system, such that it enters the patient's system and, thus, is subject to metabolism and other like processes, for example, subcutaneous administration.

[0165] These compounds may be administered to humans and other animals for therapy by any suitable route of administration, including orally, nasally, as by, for

example, a spray, rectally, intravaginally, parenterally, intracisternally and topically, as by powders, ointments or drops, including buccally and sublingually.

[0166] Regardless of the route of administration selected, the compounds of the present invention, which may be used in a suitable hydrated form, and/or the pharmaceutical compositions of the present invention, are formulated into pharmaceutically acceptable dosage forms such as described below or by other conventional methods known to those of skill in the art.

[0167] Actual dosage levels of the active ingredients in the pharmaceutical compositions of this invention may be varied so as to obtain an amount of the active ingredient which is effective to achieve the desired therapeutic response for a particular patient, composition, and mode of administration, without being toxic to the patient.

[0168] The selected dosage level will depend upon a variety of factors including the activity of the particular compound of the present invention employed, or the ester, salt or amide thereof, the route of administration, the time of administration, the rate of excretion of the particular compound being employed, the duration of the treatment, other drugs, compounds and/or materials used in combination with the particular compound employed, the age, sex, weight, condition, general health and prior medical history of the patient being treated, and like factors well known in the medical arts.

[0169] A physician or veterinarian having ordinary skill in the art can readily determine and prescribe the effective amount of the pharmaceutical composition required. For example, the physician or veterinarian could start doses of the compounds of the invention employed in the pharmaceutical composition at levels lower than that required in order to achieve the desired therapeutic effect and gradually increase the dosage until the desired effect is achieved.

[0170] In general, a suitable daily dose of a compound of the invention will be that amount of the compound which is the lowest dose effective to produce a therapeutic effect. Such an effective dose will generally depend upon the factors described above. Generally, intravenous, intracerebroventricular and subcutaneous doses of the compounds

of this invention for a patient will range from about 0.0001 to about 100 mg per kilogram of body weight per day.

[0171] If desired, the effective daily dose of the active compound may be administered as two, three, four, five, six or more sub-doses administered separately at appropriate intervals throughout the day, optionally, in unit dosage forms.

[0172] The term "treatment" is intended to encompass also prophylaxis, therapy and cure.

[0173] In addition to primates, such as humans, a variety of other mammals can be treated according to the method of the present invention. For instance, mammals including, but not limited to, cows, sheep, goats, horses, dogs, cats, guinea pigs, rats or other bovine, ovine, equine, canine, feline, rodent or murine species can be treated. However, the method can also be practiced in other species, such as avian species (e.g., chickens).

[0174] The compound of the invention can be administered as such or in admixtures with pharmaceutically acceptable carriers and can also be administered in conjunction with other antimicrobial agents such as penicillins, cephalosporins, aminoglycosides and glycopeptides. Conjunctive therapy, thus includes sequential, simultaneous and separate administration of the active compound in a way that the therapeutical effects of the first administered one is not entirely disappeared when the subsequent is administered.

[0175] Embodiments of the present invention also provide articles of manufacture that can include a packaging material and a pharmaceutical composition contained within the packaging material. The packaging material can comprise a label which indicates that the pharmaceutical composition can be used for treatment of one or more disorders identified above.

[0176] The pharmaceutical composition can include a compound according to the present invention. In addition to a compound of the present invention, the pharmaceutical may also contain other therapeutic agents, and may be formulated, for example, by employing conventional solid or liquid vehicles or diluents, as well as pharmaceutical

additives of a type appropriate to the mode of desired administration (for example, excipients, binders, preservatives, stabilizers, flavors, etc.) according to techniques known in the art of pharmaceutical formulation.

[0177] Thus, in one embodiment, the invention provides a pharmaceutical composition including a therapeutic agent and a compound of the invention. The compound is present in a concentration effective to treat cancer.

[0178] The compounds of the invention may be formulated into therapeutic compositions as natural or salt forms. Pharmaceutically acceptable non-toxic salts include the base addition salts (formed with free carboxyl or other anionic groups) which may be derived from inorganic bases such as, for example, sodium, potassium, ammonium, calcium, or ferric hydroxides, and such organic bases as isopropylamine, trimethylamine, 2-ethylamino-ethanol, histidine, procaine, and the like. Such salts may also be formed as acid addition salts with any free cationic groups and will generally be formed with inorganic acids such as, for example, hydrochloric, sulfuric, or phosphoric acids, or organic acids such as acetic, citric, p-toluenesulfonic, methanesulfonic acid, oxalic, tartaric, mandelic, and the like.

[0179] Salts of the invention can include amine salts formed by the protonation of an amino group with inorganic acids such as hydrochloric acid, hydrobromic acid, hydroiodic acid, sulfuric acid, phosphoric acid, and the like. Salts of the invention can also include amine salts formed by the protonation of an amino group with suitable organic acids, such as p-toluenesulfonic acid, acetic acid, methanesulfonic acid and the like. Additional excipients which are contemplated for use in the practice of the present invention are those available to those of ordinary skill in the art, for example, those found in the United States Pharmacopeia Vol. XXII and National Formulary Vol. XVII, U.S. Pharmacopeia Convention, Inc., Rockville, MD (1989), the relevant contents of which is incorporated herein by reference. In addition, polymorphs of the invention compounds are included in the present invention.

[0180] Pharmaceutical compositions of the invention may be administered by any suitable means, for example, orally, such as in the form of tablets, capsules, granules or

powders; sublingually; buccally; parenterally, such as by subcutaneous, intravenous, intramuscular, intrathecal, or intracisternal injection or infusion techniques (e.g., as sterile injectable aqueous or non-aqueous solutions or suspensions); nasally such as by inhalation spray; topically, such as in the form of a cream or ointment; or rectally such as in the form of suppositories; in dosage unit formulations containing non-toxic, pharmaceutically acceptable vehicles or diluents. The present compounds may, for example, be administered in a form suitable for immediate release or extended release. Immediate release or extended release may be achieved by the use of suitable pharmaceutical compositions comprising the present compounds, or, particularly in the case of extended release, by the use of devices such as subcutaneous implants or osmotic pumps. The present compounds may also be administered liposomally.

[0181] The pharmaceutical compositions for the administration of the compounds of this embodiment, either alone or in combination with other therapeutic agents, may conveniently be presented in dosage unit form and may be prepared by any of the methods well known in the art of pharmacy. All methods include bringing the active ingredient into association with the carrier which constitutes one or more accessory ingredients. In general, the pharmaceutical compositions are prepared by uniformly and intimately bringing the active ingredient into association with a liquid carrier or a finely divided solid carrier or both, and then, if necessary, shaping the product into the desired formulation. In the pharmaceutical composition the active object compound is included in an amount sufficient to produce the desired effect upon the process or condition of diseases. The pharmaceutical compositions containing the active ingredient may be in a form suitable for oral use, for example, as tablets, troches, lozenges, aqueous or oily suspensions, dispersible powders or granules, emulsions, hard or soft capsules, or syrups or elixirs.

[0182] Compositions intended for oral use may be prepared according to any method known to the art for the manufacture of pharmaceutical compositions and such compositions may contain one or more agents selected from the group consisting of sweetening agents, flavoring agents, coloring agents and preserving agents in order to provide pharmaceutically elegant and palatable preparations. Tablets contain the active

ingredient in admixture with non-toxic pharmaceutically acceptable excipients which are suitable for the manufacture of tablets. These excipients may be for example, inert diluents, such as calcium carbonate, sodium carbonate, lactose, calcium phosphate or sodium phosphate; granulating and disintegrating agents, for example, corn starch, or alginic acid; binding agents, for example starch, gelatin or acacia, and lubricating agents, for example magnesium stearate, stearic acid or talc. The tablets may be uncoated or they may be coated by known techniques to delay disintegration and absorption in the gastrointestinal tract and thereby provide a sustained action over a longer period. For example, a time delay material such as glyceryl monostearate or glyceryl distearate may be employed. They may also be coated to form osmotic therapeutic tablets for control release.

[0183] Formulations for oral use may also be presented as hard gelatin capsules wherein the active ingredient is mixed with an inert solid diluent, for example, calcium carbonate, calcium phosphate or kaolin, or as soft gelatin capsules wherein the active ingredient is mixed with water or an oil medium, for example peanut oil, liquid paraffin, or olive oil.

[0184] Aqueous suspensions contain the active materials in admixture with excipients suitable for the manufacture of aqueous suspensions. Such excipients are suspending agents, for example sodium carboxymethylcellulose, methylcellulose, hydroxypropylmethylcellulose, sodium alginate, polyvinyl-pyrrolidone, gum tragacanth and gum acacia; dispersing or wetting agents may be a naturally-occurring phosphatide, for example lecithin, or condensation products of an alkylene oxide with fatty acids, for example polyoxyethylene stearate, or condensation products of ethylene oxide with long chain aliphatic alcohols, for example heptadecaethyleneoxycetanol, or condensation products of ethylene oxide with partial esters derived from fatty acids and a hexitol such as polyoxyethylene sorbitol monooleate, or condensation products of ethylene oxide with partial esters derived from fatty acids and hexitol anhydrides, for example polyethylene sorbitan monooleate. Also useful as a solubilizer is polyethylene glycol, for example. The aqueous suspensions may also contain one or more preservatives, for example ethyl, or *n*-

propyl, *p*-hydroxybenzoate, one or more coloring agents, one or more flavoring agents, and one or more sweetening agents, such as sucrose or saccharin.

[0185] Oily suspensions may be formulated by suspending the active ingredient in a vegetable oil, for example arachis oil, olive oil, sesame oil or coconut oil, or in a mineral oil such as liquid paraffin. The oily suspensions may contain a thickening agent, for example beeswax, hard paraffin or cetyl alcohol. Sweetening agents such as those set forth above, and flavoring agents may be added to provide a palatable oral preparation. These compositions may be preserved by the addition of an anti-oxidant such as ascorbic acid.

[0186] Dispersible powders and granules suitable for preparation of an aqueous suspension by the addition of water provide the active ingredient in admixture with a dispersing or wetting agent, suspending agent and one or more preservatives. Suitable dispersing or wetting agents and suspending agents are exemplified by those already mentioned above. Additional excipients, for example sweetening, flavoring and coloring agents, may also be present.

[0187] Syrups and elixirs may be formulated with sweetening agents, for example glycerol, propylene glycol, sorbitol or sucrose. Such formulations may also contain a demulcent, a preservative and flavoring and coloring agents.

[0188] The pharmaceutical compositions may be in the form of a sterile injectable aqueous or oleagenous suspension. This suspension may be formulated according to the known art using those suitable dispersing or wetting agents and suspending agents which have been mentioned above. The sterile injectable preparation may also be a sterile injectable solution or suspension in a parenterally-acceptable diluent or solvent or cosolvent or complexing agent or dispersing agent or excipient or combination thereof, for example 1,3-butanediol, polyethylene glycols, polypropylene glycols, ethanol or other alcohols, povidones, various brands of TWEEN surfactant, sodium dodecyl sulfate, sodium deoxycholate, dimethylacetamide, polysorbates, poloxamers, cyclodextrins, lipids, and excipients such as inorganic salts (e.g., sodium chloride), buffering agents (e.g., sodium citrate, sodium phosphate), and sugars (e.g., saccharose and dextrose).

Among the acceptable vehicles and solvents that may be employed are water, dextrose solutions, Ringer's solutions and isotonic sodium chloride solution. In addition, sterile, fixed oils are conventionally employed as a solvent or suspending medium. For this purpose any bland fixed oil may be employed including synthetic mono- or diglycerides. In addition, fatty acids such as oleic acid find use in the preparation of injectables.

[0189] Depending on the condition being treated, these pharmaceutical compositions may be formulated and administered systemically or locally. Techniques for formulation and administration may be found in the latest edition of "Remington's Pharmaceutical Sciences" (Mack Publishing Co, Easton Pa.). Suitable routes may, for example, include oral or transmucosal administration; as well as parenteral delivery, including intramuscular, subcutaneous, intramedullary, intrathecal, intraventricular, intravenous, intraperitoneal, or intranasal administration. For injection, the pharmaceutical compositions of the invention may be formulated in aqueous solutions, preferably in physiologically compatible buffers such as Hanks' solution, Ringer's solution, or physiologically buffered saline. For tissue or cellular administration, penetrants appropriate to the particular barrier to be permeated are used in the formulation. Such penetrants are generally known in the art. Pharmaceutical formulations for parenteral administration include aqueous solutions of the active compounds in water-soluble form. Additionally, suspensions of the active compounds may be prepared as appropriate oily injection suspensions. Suitable lipophilic solvents or vehicles include fatty oils such as sesame oil, or synthetic fatty acid esters, such as ethyl oleate or triglycerides, or liposomes. Aqueous injection suspensions may contain substances that increase the viscosity of the suspension, such as sodium carboxymethyl cellulose, sorbitol, or dextran. Optionally, the suspension may also contain suitable stabilizers or agents that increase the solubility of the compounds to allow for the preparation of highly concentrated solutions.

[0190] The compounds of the present invention may also be administered in the form of suppositories for rectal, urethral, or vaginal administration of the drug. These compositions can be prepared by mixing the drug with a suitable non-irritating excipient which is solid at ordinary temperatures but liquid at the rectal temperature and will

therefore melt in the rectum to release the drug. Such materials are cocoa butter and polyethylene glycols.

[0191] For topical use, creams, ointments, jellies, solutions or suspensions, etc., containing the compounds of the present invention are employed. (For purposes of this application, topical application shall include mouthwashes and gargles).

[0192] In one embodiment, the invention compounds are administered in combination with an anti-inflammatory agent, antihistamines, chemotherapeutic agent, immunomodulator, therapeutic antibody or a protein kinase inhibitor; e.g., a tyrosine kinase inhibitor, to a subject in need of such treatment. While not wanting to be limiting, chemotherapeutic agents include antimetabolites, such as methotrexate, DNA cross-linking agents, such as cisplatin/carboplatin; alkylating agents, such as canbusil; topoisomerase I inhibitors such as dactinomycin; microtubule inhibitors such as taxol (paclitaxol), and the like. Other chemotherapeutic agents include, for example, a vinca alkaloid, mitomycin-type antibiotic, bleomycin-type antibiotic, antifolate, colchicine, demecolone, etoposide, taxane, anthracycline antibiotic, doxorubicin, daunorubicin, carminomycin, epirubicin, idarubicin, mithoxanthrone, 4-dimethoxy-daunomycin, 11-deoxydaunorubicin, 13-deoxydaunorubicin, adriamycin-14-benzoate, adriamycin-14-octanoate, adriamycin-14-naphthaleneacetate, amsacrine, carmustine, cyclophosphamide, cytarabine, etoposide, lovastatin, melphalan, topotecan, oxalaplatin, chlorambucil, methotrexate, lomustine, thioguanine, asparaginase, vinblastine, vindesine, tamoxifen, or mechlorethamine. While not wanting to be limiting, therapeutic antibodies include antibodies directed against the HER2 protein, such as trastuzumab; antibodies directed against growth factors or growth factor receptors, such as bevacizumab, which targets vascular endothelial growth factor, and OSI-774, which targets epidermal growth factor; antibodies targeting integrin receptors, such as Vitaxin (also known as MEDI-522), and the like. Classes of anticancer agents suitable for use in compositions and methods of the present invention include, but are not limited to: 1) alkaloids, including, microtubule inhibitors (e.g., Vincristine, Vinblastine, and Vindesine, etc.), microtubule stabilizers (e.g., Paclitaxel [Taxol], and Docetaxel, Taxotere, etc.), and chromatin function inhibitors, including, topoisomerase inhibitors, such as, epipodophyllotoxins (e.g.,

Etoposide [VP-16], and Teniposide [VM-26], etc.), and agents that target topoisomerase I (e.g., Camptothecin and Irinotecan [CPT-11], etc.); 2) covalent DNA-binding agents [alkylating agents], including, nitrogen mustards (e.g., Mechlorethamine, Chlorambucil, Cyclophosphamide, Ifosfamide, and Busulfan [Myleran], etc.), nitrosoureas (e.g., Carmustine, Lomustine, and Semustine, etc.), and other alkylating agents (e.g., Dacarbazine, Hydroxymethylmelamine, Thiotepe, and Mitocycin, etc.); 3) noncovalent DNA-binding agents [antitumor antibiotics], including, nucleic acid inhibitors (e.g., Dactinomycin [Actinomycin D], etc.), anthracyclines (e.g., Daunorubicin [Daunomycin, and Cerubidine], Doxorubicin [Adriamycin], and Idarubicin [Idamycin], etc.), anthracenediones (e.g., anthracycline analogues, such as, [Mitoxantrone], etc.), bleomycins (Blenoxane), etc., and plicamycin (Mithramycin), etc.; 4) antimetabolites, including, antifolates (e.g., Methotrexate, Folex, and Mexate, etc.), purine antimetabolites (e.g., 6-Mercaptopurine [6-MP, Purinethol], 6-Thioguanine [6-TG], Azathioprine, Acyclovir, Ganciclovir, Chlorodeoxyadenosine, 2-Chlorodeoxyadenosine [CdA], and 2'-Deoxycoformycin [Pentostatin], etc.), pyrimidine antagonists (e.g., fluoropyrimidines [e.g., 5-fluorouracil (Aduvix), 5-fluorodeoxyuridine (FdUrd) (Flouxuridine)] etc.), and cytosine arabinosides (e.g., Cytosar [ara-C] and Fludarabine, etc.); 5) enzymes, including, L-asparaginase; 6) hormones, including, glucocorticoids, such as, antiestrogens (e.g., Tamoxifen, etc.), nonsteroidal antiandrogens (e.g., Flutamide, etc.), and aromatase inhibitors (e.g., anastrozole [Arimidex], etc.); 7) platinum compounds (e.g., Cisplatin and Carboplatin, etc.); 8) monoclonal antibodies conjugated with anticancer drugs, toxins, and/or radionuclides, etc.; 9) biological response modifiers (e.g., interferons [e.g., IFN- α , etc.] and interleukins [e.g., IL-2, etc.], etc.); 10) adoptive immunotherapy; 11) hematopoietic growth factors; 12) agents that induce tumor cell differentiation (e.g., all-trans-retinoic acid, etc.); 13) gene therapy techniques; 14) antisense therapy techniques; 15) tumor vaccines; 16) therapies directed against tumor metastases (e.g., Batimistat, etc.); and 17) inhibitors of angiogenesis.

[0193] The pharmaceutical composition and method of the present invention may further comprise other therapeutically active compounds as noted herein which are usually applied in the treatment of the above mentioned pathological conditions.

Examples of other therapeutic agents include the following: cyclosporins (e.g., cyclosporin A), CTLA4-Ig, antibodies such as ICAM-3, anti-IL-2 receptor (Anti-Tac), anti-CD45RB, anti-CD2, anti-CD3 (OKT-3), anti-CD4, anti-CD80, anti-CD86, agents blocking the interaction between CD40 and gp39, such as antibodies specific for CD40 and/or gp39 (i.e., CD154), fusion proteins constructed from CD40 and gp39 (CD40Ig and CD8gp39), inhibitors, such as nuclear translocation inhibitors, of NF- κ B function, such as deoxyspergualin (DSG), cholesterol biosynthesis inhibitors such as HMG CoA reductase inhibitors (lovastatin and simvastatin), non-steroidal antiinflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen and cyclooxygenase inhibitors such as rofecoxib, steroids such as prednisone or dexamethasone, gold compounds, antiproliferative agents such as methotrexate, FK506 (tacrolimus, Prograf), mycophenolate mofetil, cytotoxic drugs such as azathioprine and cyclophosphamide, TNF- α inhibitors such as tenidap, anti-TNF antibodies or soluble TNF receptor, and rapamycin (sirolimus or Rapamune) or derivatives thereof.

[0194] Other agents that may be administered in combination with invention compounds include protein therapeutic agents such as cytokines, immunomodulatory agents and antibodies. As used herein the term "cytokine" encompasses chemokines, interleukins, lymphokines, monokines, colony stimulating factors, and receptor associated proteins, and functional fragments thereof. As used herein, the term "functional fragment" refers to a polypeptide or peptide which possesses biological function or activity that is identified through a defined functional assay.

[0195] The cytokines include endothelial monocyte activating polypeptide II (EMAP-II), granulocyte-macrophage-CSF (GM-CSF), granulocyte-CSF (G-CSF), macrophage-CSF (M-CSF), IL-1, IL-2, IL-3, IL-4, IL-5, IL-6, IL-12, and IL-13, interferons, and the like and which is associated with a particular biologic, morphologic, or phenotypic alteration in a cell or cell mechanism.

[0196] When other therapeutic agents are employed in combination with the compounds of the present invention they may be used for example in amounts as noted in

the Physician Desk Reference (PDR) or as otherwise determined by one having ordinary skill in the art.

[0197] In the treatment or prevention of conditions which involve cellular proliferation, an appropriate dosage level can generally be between about 0.01 and about 1000 mg per 1 kg of patient body weight per day which can be administered in single or multiple doses. For example, the dosage level can be between about 0.01 and about 250 mg/kg per day; more narrowly, between about 0.5 and about 100 mg/kg per day. A suitable dosage level can be between about 0.01 and about 250 mg/kg per day, between about 0.05 and about 100 mg/kg per day, or between about 0.1 and about 50 mg/kg per day, or about 1.0 mg/kg per day. For example, within this range the dosage can be between about 0.05 and about 0.5 mg/kg per day, or between about 0.5 and about 5 mg/kg per day, or between about 5 and about 50 mg/kg per day. For oral administration, the compositions can be provided in the form of tablets containing between about 1.0 and about 1,000 mg of the active ingredient, for example, about 1.0, about 5.0, about 10.0, about 15.0, about 20.0, about 25.0, about 50.0, about 75.0, about 100.0, about 150.0, about 200.0, about 250.0, about 300.0, about 400.0, about 500.0, about 600.0, about 750.0, about 800.0, about 900.0, and about 1,000.0 mg of the active ingredient for the symptomatic adjustment of the dosage to the patient to be treated. The compounds can be administered on a regimen of 1 to 4 times per day, such as once or twice per day. There may be a period of no administration followed by another regimen of administration.

[0198] It will be understood, however, that the specific dose level and frequency of dosage for any particular patient may be varied and will depend upon a variety of factors including the activity of the specific compound employed, the metabolic stability and length of action of that compound, the age, body weight, general health, sex, diet, mode and time of administration, rate of excretion, drug combination, the severity of the particular condition, and the host undergoing therapy.

[0199] Compounds of the present invention can be used, alone or in combination with an effective amount of a therapeutic antibody (or therapeutic fragment thereof), a chemotherapeutic or an immunotoxic agent, for treatment of tumors. Illustrative

examples of chemotherapeutic agents that can be used for this purpose include doxorubicin, docetaxel, or taxol. It should be further understood that the invention includes combination therapy including a compound of the invention, including but not limited to vasculostatic agents, such as tyrosine, serine or threonine kinase inhibitors, for example, Src-family inhibitors, and any chemotherapeutic agent or therapeutic antibody.

[0200] The subject aromatic compounds, and derivatives thereof, can be prepared readily by employing known synthetic methodology. As is well known in the art, these coupling reactions are carried out under relatively mild conditions and tolerate a wide range of "spectator" functionality. Additional compounds may be synthesized and tested in a combinatorial fashion, to facilitate the identification of additional compounds which may be employed in the subject method.

[0201] The aromatic compounds of the present invention, particularly libraries of variants having various representative classes of substituents, are amenable to combinatorial chemistry and other parallel synthesis schemes (see, for example, PCT WO 94/08051). The result is that large libraries of related compounds, e.g. a variegated library of compounds represented above, can be screened rapidly in high throughput assays in order to identify potential *Wnt* regulator lead compounds, as well as to refine the specificity, toxicity, and/or cytotoxic-kinetic profile of a lead compound. For instance, *Wnt* bioactivity assays, such as may be developed using cells with a *Wnt* receptor and/or a *ptc* loss-of-function, *hedgehog* gain-of-function, or *smoothened* gain-of-function, can be used to screen a library of the subject compounds for those having agonist activity toward *Wnt* or antagonist activity towards *Wnt*. Alternatively, bioactivity assays using cells with *Wnt* receptors can be used to screen a library of the subject compounds for those having antagonist activity toward *Wnt* or agonist activity towards *Wnt*.

[0202] Simply for illustration, a combinatorial library for the purposes of the present invention is a mixture of chemically related compounds which may be screened together for a desired property. The preparation of many related compounds in a single reaction greatly reduces and simplifies the number of screening processes which need to be carried

out. Screening for the appropriate physical properties can be done by conventional methods.

[0203] A variety of techniques are available in the art for generating combinatorial libraries of small organic molecules such as the subject aromatic compounds. See, for example, Blondelle et al., *Trends Anal. Chem.* 14:83 (1995); the Affymax U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,359,115 and 5,362,899; the Ellman U.S. Pat. No. 5,288,514; the Still et al. PCT publication WO 94/08051; the ArQule U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,736,412 and 5,712,171; Chen et al., *JACS* 116:2661 (1994); Kerr et al., *JACS* 115:252 (1993); PCT publications WO92/10092, WO93/09668 and WO91/07087; and the Lerner et al. PCT publication WO93/20242). Accordingly, a variety of libraries on the order of about 100 to 1,000,000 or more diversomers of the subject compounds can be synthesized and screened for particular activity or property.

[0204] In an exemplary embodiment, a library of candidate compound diversomers can be synthesized utilizing a scheme adapted to the techniques described in the Still et al. PCT publication WO 94/08051, e.g., being linked to a polymer bead by a hydrolyzable or photolyzable group, optionally located at one of the positions of the candidate regulators or a substituent of a synthetic intermediate. According to the Still et al. technique, the library is synthesized on a set of beads, each bead including a set of tags identifying the particular diversomer on that bead. The bead library can then be "plated" with, for example, cells having *Wnt* receptors for which a *Wnt* agonist is sought. The diversomers can be released from the bead, e.g. by hydrolysis.

[0205] Many variations on the above and related pathways permit the synthesis of widely diverse libraries of compounds which may be tested as regulators of *Wnt* function.

[0206] There are a variety of assays available for determining the ability of an aromatic compound such as a *Wnt* antagonist to regulate *Wnt* function, many of which can be disposed in high-throughput formats. In many drug screening programs which test libraries of compounds and natural extracts, high throughput assays are desirable in order to maximize the number of compounds surveyed in a given period of time. Thus, libraries

of synthetic and natural products can be sampled for other compounds which are *Wnt* antagonists.

[0207] In addition to cell-free assays, test compounds can also be tested in cell-based assays. In one embodiment, cells which have a mutation resulting in aberrant cell growth can be contacted with a test agent of interest, with the assay scoring for, e.g., inhibition of proliferation of the cell in the presence of the test agent. Such a mutation can include, for example, a mutation in the β -catenin gene or a mutation in the APC gene.

[0208] A number of gene products have been implicated in Wnt-mediated signal transduction, including Wnt, patched, transcription factors of the cubitus interruptus (ci) family, the serine/threonine kinase fused (fu) and the gene products of costal-2, smoothened and suppressor of fused.

[0209] The induction of cells by Wnt proteins sets in motion a cascade involving the activation and inhibition of downstream effectors, the ultimate consequence of which is, in some instances, a detectable change in the transcription or translation of a gene. Potential transcriptional targets of Wnt-mediated signaling are the GSK3 β complex, and the frizzled receptor (Fz). By selecting transcriptional regulatory sequences from such target genes, that are responsible for the up- or down-regulation of these genes in response to Wnt signaling, and operatively linking such promoters to a reporter gene, one can derive a transcription based assay which is sensitive to the ability of a specific test compound to modify Wnt-mediated signaling pathways. Expression of the reporter gene, thus, provides a valuable screening tool for the development of compounds that act as antagonists to *Wnt*.

[0210] Reporter gene based assays of this invention measure the end stage of the above described cascade of events, e.g., transcriptional modulation. Accordingly, in practicing one embodiment of the assay, a reporter gene construct is inserted into the reagent cell in order to generate a detection signal dependent on stimulation by *Wnt*. The amount of transcription from the reporter gene may be measured using any method known to those of skill in the art to be suitable. For example, mRNA expression from the reporter gene may be detected using RNase protection or RNA-based PCR, or the protein

product of the reporter gene may be identified by a characteristic stain or an intrinsic biological activity. The amount of expression from the reporter gene is then compared to the amount of expression in either the same cell in the absence of the test compound or it may be compared with the amount of transcription in a substantially identical cell that lacks the target receptor protein. Any statistically or otherwise significant decrease in the amount of transcription indicates that the test compound has in some manner antagonized the normal *Wnt* signal, e.g., the test compound is a potential *Wnt* antagonist.

[0211] A particular advantage to the screening assays of the invention finds application to the design of personalized medicine. For example, a plurality of test agents can be arranged in an array, which can be an addressable array, on a solid support such as a microchip, on a glass slide, on a bead, or in a well, and the cells of a subject (e.g., a biopsy sample) can be contacted with the different test agents to identify one or more agents having desirable characteristics, including, for example, in addition to the ability to modulate *Wnt* activity, minimal or no toxicity to the cell, desirable solubility characteristics, and the like. Consequently, a treatment regimen may be tailored specifically to the individual based upon the subject's levels of *Wnt* activity, *Fz* activity, and/or *GSK3 β* activity.

[0212] Once disease is established and a treatment protocol is initiated, screening assays of the invention may be repeated on a regular basis to evaluate whether any of the levels of *Wnt* activity, *Fz* activity, and/or *GSK3 β* activity in the patient begins to approximate that which is observed in a normal patient. The results obtained from successive assays may be used to show the efficacy of treatment over a period ranging from several days to months. Accordingly, the invention is also directed to methods for monitoring a therapeutic regimen for treating a subject having cancer. A comparison of any of the levels of *Wnt* activity, *Fz* activity, and/or *GSK3 β* activity prior to and during therapy indicates the efficacy of the therapy. Therefore, one skilled in the art will be able to recognize and adjust the therapeutic approach as needed.

[0213] As used herein, a "corresponding normal sample" is any sample taken from a subject of similar species that is considered healthy or otherwise not suffering from a

cancer disease being treated. As such, a normal/standard levels of Wnt activity, Fz activity, and/or GSK3 β activity denotes the level of Wnt activity, Fz activity, and/or GSK3 β activity present in a sample from the normal sample. A normal level of Wnt activity, Fz activity, and/or GSK3 β activity can be established by combining body fluids or cell extracts taken from normal healthy subjects, preferably human, with antibody to the proteins of interest under conditions suitable for Wnt activity, Fz activity, and/or GSK3 β activity. Levels of Wnt activity, Fz activity, and/or GSK3 β activity in subject, control, and disease samples from biopsied tissues can be compared with the standard values. Deviation between standard and subject values establishes the parameters for diagnosing and treating disease. A normal level of Wnt activity, Fz activity, and/or GSK3 β activity also can be determined as an average value taken from a population of subjects that is considered to be healthy, or is at least free of cancer. A variety of protocols including ELISA, RIA, and FACS are useful for measuring levels of Wnt activity, Fz activity, and/or GSK3 β activity, and provide a basis for diagnosing altered or abnormal levels Wnt activity, Fz activity, and/or GSK3 β activity.

[0214] The following examples are provided to further illustrate the advantages and features of the present invention, but are not intended to limit the scope of the invention.

Example 1

Screen for Small-Molecule Modulators of the Wnt Signaling Pathway

[0215] A Wnt-sensitive reporter (*7xTCF-luciferase* (Firefly) (pSUPERTOPFLASH) and constitutively expressed control reporter (*Renilla luciferase* pRL-SV40, Promega) were transfected into the indicated cell lines (Fig. 1), and cells were stimulated with Wnt3A-containing medium as a source of activating ligand (medium conditioned by growth of Wnt3A/L cells; CRL-2647, ATCC). Wnt-sensitive reporter activity, normalized to the constitutive reporter, was induced by as much as several hundred fold as compared to basal levels.

[0216] Taking advantage of sensitive, synthetic TCF/LEF site-based promoters fused to the firefly luciferase gene (e.g., pSUPERTOPFLASH; Lum et al., 2003) and various

Wnt-responsive mammalian cell lines we engineered stable, cell-based reporter systems useful for high-throughput screens of Wnt pathway modulators. These lines also feature Renilla luciferase control reporters (e.g., pRL-SV40; Promega) that are stably integrated and constitutively expressed. Using Wnt3A-conditioned medium as a source of activating ligand (see CRL-2647, ATCC) we are able to routinely achieve induced reporter activities measuring 100- to 200-fold higher than basal levels (J. Chen, R. Mann, P. Beachy, unpublished). The assay system easily scaled-down to a 384-well format and, using pin transfers on Biomek FX robotics (Beckman), we screened 40,000 compounds from ChemDiv and ChemBridge collections (at a concentration of approx. 2 micromolar) and isolated small sets of candidate Wnt pathway agonists and antagonists (unpublished). Secondary screens using luciferase reporters that are constitutively expressed enabled identification of compounds that act directly on the assay reporter enzyme rather than through modulation of transcription through TCF sites. Dose-response experiments were used to calculate IC_{50} s of candidate compounds; the profile of one of the candidate Wnt antagonists (A6) is shown in Figure 2.

[0217] Dose-response behavior of the Wnt reporter (*7xTCF-luciferase* (Firefly) (pSUPERTOPFLASH) and control reporter (Renilla luciferase (pRL-SV40)) with candidate Wnt antagonist A6 (number 4687-0060) is shown in Fig. 2. At 5 μ M there is a marked reduction in luciferase activity with only a minor effect on control Renilla luciferase. The IC_{50} of A6 is estimated to be 2-3 μ M. Toxicity, as indicated by a dramatic loss of both Firefly luciferase and Renilla luciferase levels, was observed at the highest concentration (50 μ M) used in the titration experiment (not shown). At 5 μ M there was no effect on the Firefly luciferase activity derived from a constitutive promoter (not shown).

[0218] The screen for compounds that modulate Wnt pathway activity also uncovered an agonist for the Wnt pathway, i.e., a compound that stimulates expression of the Wnt reporter in the absence of Wnt protein stimulation. Preliminary studies suggest that this Wnt pathway agonist acts directly on the transcriptional machinery of this signaling cascade. Normal pathway activation induced by Wnt proteins results in the stabilization and cellular accumulation of a protein called β -catenin. This increase in β -catenin levels promotes the conversion of TCF/LEF repressors to transcriptional activators, thereby

inducing the expression of Wnt target genes. In contrast, the small molecule agonist activates the Wnt pathway without causing β -catenin stabilization, suggesting that it modulates TCF/LEF activity in a more direct manner (Fig. 3, A and B). This model is supported by our recent observation that the subcellular localization of LEF-1 changes upon the addition of the synthetic agonist to Wnt-responsive cells (Fig. 3, C and D). This compound or more potent derivatives may be useful for stimulation of the Wnt pathway for protection from injury or to stimulate recovery from tissue injury, in a variety of tissues ranging from the nervous system to the hematopoietic system.

[0219] Although the invention has been described with reference to the above examples, it will be understood that modifications and variations are encompassed within the spirit and scope of the invention. Accordingly, the invention is limited only by the following claims.